



THE
LIFE AND TIMES
of
LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH.

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CHAPTER I.

Interior of the court.—Effect of Louis's character.—Bussy Rabutin.—Fall of La Vallière.—History and rise of Madame de Montespan.—The conduct of Lauzun.—Children of Madame de Montespan.—Personages who gave tone to the age.—La Feuillade—at St. Godard—in Candia.—Death of the Duke of Beaufort.—Statue and Place des Victoires.—St. Aignan—his talents for decoration—his bombast.—The Count de Lauzun—his character—his marriage—his fall.—Marsillac—the respect which Louis entertained for him.—The Duke d'Antin—his character.—Colbert.—Louvois.—Pomponne—Conspiracy and execution of the Chevalier de Rohan.—Administration of justice.—The poisoners.—Crimes, trial, and death of Madame de Binvilliers.—The crime increases—discovery and trial of the culprits.—Chambre Ardente—subservient to base purposes.—Accusations against Madame de Bouillon—The Countess of Soissons and her fate.—Accusation and trial of Luxembourg.—Louis oppresses the Protestants.—Revocation of the Edict of Nantes—Cruelty and fanaticism.—Death of Colbert.—Versailles—the Invalides.

WHILE the war between France and Holland speedily brought all the other powers of Europe into the field, and the varied successes of the different states promised to alter entirely the geographical divisions of this quarter of the globe, the great change in society which had begun in the commencement of the reign of Louis XIV.

went on rapidly, and though emanating from the court of France, affected the whole of Europe.

Though the efforts of the French King in arms was calculated to keep up the military spirit of every country, the general tendency of all his other acts was to soften the manners of the people. His protection of the arts and sciences, his encouragement of commerce and manufactures, his luxurious and his ostentatious tastes, his efforts for his own country, and even the corrupt means which he employed to influence others, his talents, his follies, his virtues and his vices—all had their effect in working out that great and extraordinary change in the habits, feelings, and thoughts of mankind which was the result of his reign.

The absolute power of which Louis had now possessed himself, the desire of pleasing or serving a monarch who was sure to remark and to reward, and the fear of offending a despot who had the power, and frequently used it, to deprive of liberty unquestioned, if not to deprive of life itself, shut out from the minds of men a thousand subjects on which they might naturally have been inclined to employ themselves, and had a tendency to turn them either to those deeper and more remote, or to those more graceful and more amusing pursuits, which might be profitable to themselves, and in which the eye of despotic jealousy itself was not likely to find matter of offence. To this, not as an immediate, but as a co-operative cause, may perhaps

be traced the speculative and investigating turn which was soon taken by a great mass of intellect in France; and thus Liberty herself may owe not a little to Despotism.

Under the power of that king, even wit itself learned to shape its movements with care and circumspection: the licence which had reigned in every species of composition was repressed, and the fate of the gallant but licentious Bussy Rabutin, who had written a work called *Les Amours des Gaules*, indecent and libertine in a high degree, and was in consequence confined for a length of time in the Bastile, taught the wits of the age some degree of restraint. It is not impossible, indeed, that Louis XIV. took the opportunity afforded by his publishing that work to punish a long course of errors and evils, and a glaring indecency of conduct which even the most licentious of the court regarded with horror. But under any circumstances, no one who is forced to look into that foul and depraved libel which was generally assigned as the cause of his imprisonment, can deny that the pretext was a very reasonable one.

The proud and dignified character of the King himself affected, in the course of time, the tone of the whole court, and gave an air of gravity to all its pleasures, and even its licentiousness. It was no more the abode of jest and laughter; and though perhaps the amount of vice was not diminished, yet, instead of displaying itself openly to the eye of day,

it became a merit to conceal those intrigues which a few years before it had been considered only meritorious to display.

The King himself, it is true, was far from setting an example of virtue or even of decency ; but in the middle of his life he seemed to claim the privilege of impudent licentiousness as an exclusive prerogative of the crown. After the affair of the letter sent to the Queen regarding Mademoiselle de la Vallière, he threw off the mask entirely ; and in 1667 he erected the lordship of Vaujour into a duchy in favour of his mistress, in the name of the Duchess de la Vallière, with the reversion to his natural daughter by her.

To please Louis, which was the sole object of her life, she, on her part, repudiated her own nature : the modest, the retiring, the tender, the devoted La Vallière came forth from her retirement, blazed abroad in the world with all the splendour with which Louis could surround her, and for a time seemed to take a pleasure in showing herself as the acknowledged concubine of the monarch whom she loved. Her two children, Mademoiselle de Blois and the Count de Vermandois, were brought up publicly before her own eyes, under the care and superintendence of Colbert, by whom she was esteemed and admired ; and the mistress of the King, though never forgetting her fault, sought no longer to conceal it.

Even from a very early period, a rival was rising up at the court, whose aim and purpose was alone

to supplant Mademoiselle de la Vallière. This was the famous Marchioness de Montespan ; far inferior to La Vallière in personal graces, though celebrated for her extraordinary beauty ; but far superior to her in wit, though much inferior in sweetness and amiability.

It will be necessary soon to speak of the private history of Madame de Montespan more fully ; and therefore, in pursuing here the history of the first of those amours which marked the life, and affected even the reign of Louis XIV, it may only be requisite to say, that shortly after the King's connexion with La Vallière was known Madame de Montespan began to play that game which she ceased not to pursue till she had captivated the fickle heart of Louis, and withdrawn him entirely from her rival. We are told by La Farre, an eye-witness of and an actor in all that he recounts, that Madame de Montespan, who was *dame du palais*, “ had the address to do two opposite things at the same time ; one, to give the Queen an extraordinary opinion of her virtue, by taking the communion before her every week ; the other, to insinuate herself into the good graces of Mademoiselle de la Vallière, so as scarcely ever to quit her ;—by which contrivance she passed her whole time with the King, and did what she could to please him.” Young, beautiful, and witty, she was surrounded by young courtiers, who each sought to win her, and amongst them was La Farre himself : but finding that every night she amused the King and Queen by detailing with all her powers

of mockery and scorn everything that her lovers had said to her during the day, he began to perceive her real object, and wisely withdrew from the lists. We are told by the Duke of St. Simon, indeed, that as soon as she perceived the King's passion excited towards her, she informed her husband of the fact; and besought him to retire with her from the court: but this anecdote is hardly reconcilable with the reports of eye-witnesses, and in believing it St. Simon certainly showed a degree of charitable faith not usually found in his memoirs.

Ere long, La Vallière perceived that she had a rival; and the triumph of Madame de Montespan became complete in 1667,* during the pro-

* Many authors, and amongst others Monsieur de Monmerqué, who is always so careful and scrupulous as to render his opinion worthy of the highest consideration in regard to historical facts, imagine that the criminal connexion between Madame de Montespan and Louis XIV. did not commence till a later period, namely, in 1668: but the eldest known of their illegitimate children, who died in 1672 at three years old, was born 1669, and there is strong reason to believe that the birth of this child had been preceded by that of another; for in one of the letters of Madame de Maintenon, undoubtedly written in 1669, she speaks of the offspring of Louis and Madame de Montespan in the plural number, calling them *the children*. See an after note on the history of Madame de Maintenon.

In 1668, the King's connexion with Madame de Montespan had become the common conversation of the court; and as early as the middle of the year 1666, she obtained for Madame de Maintenon the renewal of her pension, which no other person had been able to effect, addressing the King upon the occasion in a manner which no one but a mistress or a martyr would have attempted with Louis XIV.



gress of the court through Flanders.* Day by day it became more apparent to all, and more insupportable to one who loved her seducer with all the ardour and truth of a first affection. She reproached the King with his infidelity: but reproaches for infidelity are always worse than vain from the weak to the powerful. They were received ill by the monarch, and the unhappy La Vallière once more fled from the court, and took refuge at the convent of St. Marie de Chaillot, intending to renounce the world, and, if possible, forget the passion which had betrayed her.

Louis, however, still loved her in the midst of his infidelity, and he despatched Lauzun, the captain of his guard, with orders to bring her from the convent by force;† while Colbert, the guardian of her chil-

* An anecdote is told of Madame de Montespan on this occasion which can hardly be reconciled with her situation at the time, and which probably had as much truth in its fabric as most other anecdotes, but no more. The Queen having, in the journey to Flanders, we are told, ordered that no carriage should precede her own, that of La Vallière crossed the fields and went on before. On this, Madame de Montespan, who was in the Queen's carriage, is said to have exclaimed, "God forbid that I should ever be the King's mistress! but were such a misfortune to happen to me, I should never have the face to appear before the Queen."

It is neither likely, that in a soft soil and unfavourable weather, a heavy carriage of that day should cross the fields to carry the King's mistress before his wife, nor that Madame de Montespan should have boldly talked of the *King's mistress* in presence of the Queen at any time, much less when she herself was privately his concubine.

† St. Simon, ch. xxvii.

dren, was sent to induce her to yield by persuasion. Madame de la Vallière suffered herself to be brought back to a place where she could now know no peace. But day by day her pangs became greater, the attachment of the King to Madame de Montespan more public and more decided; and the discarded mistress gradually formed the resolution of retiring from the court, not by a sudden flight, but by a retreat long prepared and previously announced.

The heart of Louis growing daily more corrupt by the increasing habit of evil, was also prepared to let her depart; and from time to time the determination of La Vallière announced itself distinctly. On one occasion, when the passion of the King for Madame de Montespan displayed itself openly before her eyes, she turned to one of her friends, and said, as we have before stated, "When anything troubles me at the Carmelites, I will call to mind what those people have made me suffer."

As soon as her determination of leaving the court was fully known, a variety of counsels was offered to her in regard to her retreat. Some advised her simply to retire into a religious house, without taking the veil; others, to quit the court with her mother, and have her children brought up under her own eyes; but others, more devout, counselled her to bind herself by an irrevocable vow: and it was the latter course that she resolved to follow. The King did not oppose her wishes; but, to preserve some appearance of regard, he desired

her to choose an order where the high dignity of abbess might still distinguish the person whom he had loved. She replied, with as much real humility as his proposal displayed of vanity and pride, that she had not been able to conduct herself in life, and was therefore unfitted to guide others. She chose one of the severest orders, that of the Carmelites, towards whom her thoughts had long turned, and having notified her intention to the court, she received the public adieus of all those who had courted her in prosperity, at the very house of her triumphant rival.

But perhaps the most painful, though in some degree satisfactory act, that she performed, was her leave-taking of the Queen. She had done all that she could, considering the situation in which she had been placed—that is to say, all that she could compatibly with her own and the monarch's criminal passion to spare the feelings of her royal mistress; and Maria Theresa had by this time learned to value even such consideration. The Queen received her upon this occasion with kindness and delicacy; but La Vallière cast herself at her feet, and in bidding her adieu for the last time, besought her with many tears to pardon all her errors and faults towards her. She then retired into the convent of the Carmelites of the Rue St. Jaques; and on the 4th of June 1675, she took the veil, in presence of the Queen and of the whole court, and assumed the name of Louise de la Miséréri-

corde. In this retirement she lived till the year 1710, practising every virtue, and endeavouring to expiate her past errors by all those mortifications and self-inflictions which, though we may regard them as acts of superstition, were joined, at least in her, with true and more effectual penitence. When informed of the death of her son, she wept for him bitterly, but observed at the same time, "Alas! I had more reason to weep for his birth."

Such was the fate of Louise de la Vallière. But the elevation of her rival must not be looked upon by the eye of history solely as a mere licentious intrigue; for there is more than one point of view in which it presents a political aspect.

The early friend and confidant of La Vallière had been Colbert; the partisan and strong supporter of Madame de Montespan was that minister's rival Louvois. It was natural that it should be so, for in the character of the two ministers there were many similar qualities to those of the persons to whom they attached themselves; and it is clearly to be perceived in all accounts of the reign of Louis XIV, that the authority of Colbert diminished, and that of Louvois increased, after the retirement of La Vallière and the elevation of Madame de Montespan.

But it was not only by giving preponderance to Louvois in the councils of Louis that Madame de Montespan influenced the fate of France: her mind, her tastes, her passions, her character altogether,

had no small effect upon society in general ; and, to use the words of Lord John Russell, “ the manners of the court partook of the character of the sovereign, and varied with the ascendancy of his different mistresses.” “ With Madame de Montespan came pomp, splendour, rich dresses, and deep play ;” and not only France, but Europe itself, received a tone from the character of Madame de Montespan. “ When a woman has the power to influence the fate of empires,” some French writer has remarked, “ the smallest traits become of importance,” and we shall, therefore, pause on the history of Madame de Montespan, as forming part of that of Louis XIV.

Françoise Athenais de Rochechouart de Mortemart was born in 1641, and was known in the gay and witty circles of the Hôtels d’Albret and de Richelieu as the beautiful Mademoiselle de Tonnay Charente. But if she was distinguished from others by her brilliant and extraordinary beauty, her whole family had found means to gain for themselves another sort of distinction by a peculiar, graceful, and yet poignant wit, which obtained in Paris the name of “ l’esprit de Mortemart.” It was possessed by Madame de Montespan in as high, or, perhaps, in a higher degree, than by any other member of her family ; though her sister, the Marquise de Thiange, and her brother, the Duc de Vivonne, were both remarkable for the same quality of mind.

At the age of twenty-two she married Henry Louis de Gondrin, Marquis de Montespan, and

immediately obtained the post of *dame du palais* to the Queen.

Louis XIV. was at this time in the height of his passion for Mademoiselle de la Vallière ; and that unhappy girl was easily led not only to believe that Athenaïs de Mortemart sought her for her own sake, but to give her every proof of friendship, and to seek her society eagerly. Though the favour of La Vallière was fully established with the King, yet the despotism of the monarch had not reached that point at which all submitted entirely to his will ; and we find from Madame de Motteville, that while the young Queen suffered with patient resignation, Anne of Austria marked her displeasure at the course her son was pursuing, and for a time discountenanced all those who frequented the society of his mistress.

Under these circumstances, the support and friendship of one who, like Madame de Montespan, was not more celebrated for her beauty and wit than for her piety and virtuous conduct, were doubly valuable to La Vallière ; and, constantly brought into communication with Louis in her apartments and in those of the Queen, the beautiful Marchioness lost no opportunity of cultivating the favour of the monarch. She first employed against him the charms of her wit, and her conversation soon became one of the chief resources of a man who was too far spoiled by fortune to appreciate the timid gentleness of the Queen, or to remain

long untired of the devoted tenderness of La Vallière.

We are told that Madame de Montespan only sought to captivate his mind, without making any impression on his heart; and it is not at all impossible that she succeeded in persuading herself that such were her views: for when she has been able to blind the eyes of even cold biographers who had but few inducements to shut them, it could be no difficult task to blind her own, with vanity, ambition, and passion, all aiding her to accomplish it. With the monarch she was fully successful: the tales which she had gathered at the court during the day, and which she related with a grace peculiarly her own; the satirical sallies which she aimed at all the puppets that had been playing their part in the diurnal pageant which surrounded the king; the witty repartees that were never wanting to enliven whatever subject was brought forward, formed the evening amusement of the King, who soon learned to gaze with passion on her beauty after listening with admiration to her wit.

Louis, unrestrained by any moral principle, was not likely to be timid in declaring to Madame de Montespan the feelings with which she had inspired him; and it was then, we are told, that she informed her husband of the danger, and besought him to carry her afar from the court. With too great confidence in her virtue, or perhaps, as some have supposed, with views of base interest, the Mar-

not be gratified without publicity. On La Vallière the proud favourite showered every mortification till she drove her from the court. That once accomplished, her pride, her luxury, her love of splendour, and her desire of domination, burst forth unrestrained. She assumed the air and manners of royalty: her table was ever the most exquisite in Paris; none but the princes of the blood were allowed to have a chair with arms in her presence; and she found it not difficult either to induce several of the ministers to consult her upon the affairs of state, or to obtain from the King a knowledge of all the most important secrets of the government.

From his own eyes the monarch concealed, and from those of his ministers he strove to conceal, the petulant and intrusive spirit of the proud woman who now ruled him, by affecting to look upon her interference with the affairs of state as the wild impertinence of a giddy girl. But if such were his feelings in reality, he suffered the person he so painted to influence his councils, to derange his court, to point his anger, and to dispense his favours, in a manner which added to the crime of his adultery with the wife of one of his subjects the crime of injustice to the rest.

The daring insolence of the Count de Lauzun, who had previously called upon his head the wrath of the King by the impatience with which he bore the most remarkable of the monarch's caprices, was punished more, undoubtedly, as an insult to Ma-

dame de Montespan, than as an offence to the King; and the fault of having hid himself under her bed,* to ascertain if she advocated or opposed his cause, was expiated by an imprisonment of many years in the castle of Pignerol. To the jealousy of the King's mistress, too, has been attributed, in a great degree, the change at the court which banished unmarried women as maids of honour to the Queen, and substituted married women instead. It is true that the discovery of some scandalous proceedings in the household was made use of as a reason for the alteration; and there can be no doubt that the pretext which changed a greater crime easy of concealment for a less which often betrayed itself, was well suited to the piety of a monarch who blamed not the irregularities of the maids of honour till he chose his mistresses from another class.

At the same time, however, that he affected to be thus scrupulous in regard to the purity of his court, he cast off all decent shame in regard to his own conduct. His children by the wife of the Marquis de Montespan were withdrawn from the concealment in which they had been first educated, produced before the world with pomp and effrontery, and legitimized by solemn acts registered in the parliament of Paris; while his mistress triumphed over his wife in the midst of state, and pomp, and

* This incident may be again noticed in another place; but the particulars are too indecent to be dwelt upon minutely.

display, the adulation of courtiers, and the enjoyment of power. The princes even of the royal blood flattered and caressed her, and the regard which Mademoiselle de Montpensier entertained towards the mistress, together with the respect she affected for the King, were employed by Louis and Madame de Montespan to induce her to constitute the Duke of Maine, the eldest surviving of their natural children, heir to a large part of her vast possessions.

As the princess had made previously a donation of a portion of this property to the unfortunate Count de Lauzun, he was also to be persuaded to yield his rights, and for that purpose was brought to the waters of Bourbon from his prison at Pignerol in order to confer with Madame de Montespan. Her eloquence and promises, together with the hope of recovering his liberty, induced him to yield, and he resigned wealth, which could not otherwise have been taken from him, on engagements which were but badly executed.

Madame de Montespan, besides her son the Duke d'Antin, by her husband, bore no less than eight children to Louis XIV. two sons, who died before they had received any of the high titles which decorated the rest of her progeny; the Count de Vexin, who also died in his youth, the Duke of Maine, the Count of Toulouse, Mademoiselle de Nantes, Mademoiselle de Tours, and Mademoiselle de Blois. Mademoiselle de Tours likewise died

young, but Mademoiselle de Nantes married the well-known Duke of Bourbon, grandson of the great Condé, and Mademoiselle de Blois became the wife of the no less famous regent, Duke of Orleans.

At the height of her ambition, in the midst of luxury and magnificence and power, remorse was still a frequent guest in the bosom of Madame de Montespan. It affected her royal paramour also, and its effects on both were skilfully taken advantage of by one who sought, not without success, to supplant the one and rule the other. But the history of Madame de Montespan's fall forms a part of that of the rise of Madame de Maintenon, which must be noticed at large at an after period, and I shall therefore turn, in justice to the former, to notice several redeeming qualities which chequered her dark and guilty course with the sunshine of some virtues. If her love of ostentatious luxury, of magnificent palaces and gardens, of works of art of all kinds, of splendour, pomp, and display, contributed to dissipate large sums, and encouraged in Louis that taste for boundless expense which, combined with other faults, exhausted his treasury and ruined his finances, she was, at the same time, the liberal protector of arts and sciences, the friend and patron of genius wherever it was to be met with, the benefactor of the poor and the needy, the first to admire virtue in others, and to bestow praise and honour where it was

due. Misfortune or sorrow seldom applied to her in vain, and she ever showed herself fearless and generous in advocating a just cause with a monarch who was not always sensible of justice. Constant regret for her fault may also be admitted to have taken a part from the heavy burden, and her general charity may be allowed to cover some of the multitude of her errors.

With regard to the many anecdotes connected with her long reign as the King's mistress, I shall have to speak of some of the best authenticated as we proceed, and her fall and death relate to an after period of the history of Louis XIV. It is now necessary to notice a few of the various persons who occupied prominent stations at the court of France during the period of her full influence, and whose peculiar characters as greatly affected society, and as certainly gave a marking tone to the times, as those of the Tancreds, the Boemonds, the Talbots, the Chandoses, and the Dunois' did to the ages of chivalry.

We have sufficiently dwelt upon the characters of Condé, Turenne, and Fabert; but a new school was rising up at the court of Louis, and out of the many remarkable persons who appeared in the commencement of his reign there are several whom we must notice more particularly. One of those who distinguished themselves from the crowd by a not impolitic originality of action was the famous Marquis de la Feuillade, a man of extraordi-

nary gallantry and courage, and who is the more worthy of notice here as having ever led the way in the display of that passionate devotion towards the King which gradually grew both into a fashion and a sentiment amongst the French nobility. He had distinguished himself early by his bravery, and never lost any opportunity of seeking out every extraordinary occasion for the display of valour. At the time of the famous battle of St. Godard he had been amongst the volunteers who rushed from France to support the Emperor against the Turks, and had made himself remarkable in that field by his intrepid daring. La Farre describes him as a madman of much wit, continually occupied in paying court to the King, and the most penetrating man about the person of Louis. "He made his fortune," says the same author, "by his extravagances; and one of the things which served him the most was quarrelling alternately with all the ministers."

In the year 1668, the Turks attacked Candia, and the Pope made strong representations of its danger to Louis XIV. in order to induce him to send troops for the deliverance of the island. Louis determined to do so; but while he was preparing a force to be despatched thither for the purpose of defending a post which was then considered the bulwark of Christendom, La Feuillade announced his intention of throwing himself into the town of Candia in order to save it from the Turks. Louis

put under his command a force of four or five hundred men ; but La Feuillade, not contented to lead this succour, raised, equipped, and provided, at his own expense, a body of between two and three hundred gentlemen of the first families in France, at whose head he proceeded to Candia, threw himself into the city, and remained there till it fell.

In the following year the Duke of Beaufort and the Duke of Navailles led to Candia more important aid ; but all that either La Feuillade or those that followed him could do was to delay the capture of the town. Beaufort himself perished in a sally, but his body was never found, and the place surrendered on the 16th of September 1669. La Feuillade returned in safety, and afterwards served with distinction under Louis XIV, showing, when sent to withdraw the troops from Sicily, which event we have noticed in another place, far more calm prudence, firmness, and forethought than might have been expected from his vehement and enterprising character. He, nevertheless, in no degree abandoned the wild and somewhat Quixotic course with which he had set out, but, shortly after his return from Candia, proceeded to Spain in order to challenge a gentleman named St. Aunai, who had spoken disrespectfully of Louis XIV. Nothing, however, resulted from this enterprise. St. Aunai denied the fact, and laughed at La Feuillade for his undertaking. At a subsequent period Louis recom-

pensed all these services and tokens of zeal by creating La Feuillade Marshal of France, by giving him the colonelcy of his guards, and by making him Governor of Dauphiné; and in return for those favours, the marshal, now become rich—though he had commenced his career, we are told, almost in a state of beggary—pulled down a number of houses in the neighbourhood of the Rue de Montmartre in order to form a square, to which he gave the name of the Place des Victoires, in commemoration of the King's military successes, and in the centre of which he erected a splendid bronze statue of Louis, that none of the courtiers failed to laud and admire.

If La Feuillade thus devised the means of flattering the King by his actions as much as by his words, the Duke of St. Aignan employed other methods of paying his court, some of which were equally extraordinary with the acts of La Feuillade. He commenced, indeed, we are told, with occupations in the service of the monarch not generally considered peculiarly dignified or respectable; but the functions of Mercury were not alone those in which St. Aignan displayed his talents. He was the deviser and leader of all pageants, ballets, carousals, and spectacles; and throughout the various splendid fêtes which were given by Louis, in the ostentatious ardour of his first love for La Vallière, St. Aignan was the inventor of all things under which the King either revealed or concealed his passion.

St. Aignan, like La Feuillade, affected a degree of Quixotic valour; but in his case it was supposed that the prowess of the knight was somewhat embellished in the narrative by the imagination of the narrator, which was generally himself. He is said even to have applied to the parliament of Paris to register a pardon which he had demanded and received, for having killed, a long time before, five men with his single hand. The matter was discussed gravely, till, one of the counsellors being asked his opinion, replied aloud, "*Cet acte gigantesque est certes merveilleux*," and the whole ended in laughter and ridicule.

His courage, however, when really called upon to display it, did not fail to second his pretensions, as was shown in the famous combat of La Frette; and his agreeable talents and serviceable qualities compensated in the eyes of the King for all his defects, so that his favour was never shaken by even his vanity.

Another person who about the same time figured in the court of Louis XIV. was Piguillain,* Count of Lauzun, whom one of his contemporaries calls "the most insolent little man that had been seen for a century." He was by no means distinguished either for great talents, agreeable manners, or personal beauty; but he rose rapidly, nevertheless, in

* I find this name written in every different manner by his contemporaries. By several it is spelled as above, but perhaps the accurate orthography would be Puyguilhem.

the esteem of the king, and was one amongst the first of those who, by the almost idolatrous homage which they rendered to the monarch, gave to the whole court that peculiar tone of submission which so long characterized society in France.

To the minds of the generality of persons in the present day, when the sovereign is looked upon simply as the chief magistrate of the people, though invested with various powers, in various countries, the adulation which Louis XIV. received from his courtiers very shortly after the commencement of his reign, and which may almost be called blasphemous, can scarcely be conceived. That flattery, however, did in reality not only pass the bounds of common sense, but of all decency. Such phrases as his *routes célestes*, his power *gouverner la terre*, &c. which the Scuderys and the Pelissons addressed to Louis daily, soon lost their zest, and Lamonnoie was obliged to go farther. He certainly scarcely left room for any one to proceed beyond him when he wrote

“Sagesse, esprit, grandeur, courage, majesté,
Tout nous montre *en Louis une divinité* ;”

or when he went on,

“A ces rares exploits, à ces coups inouïs,
Je reconnois *le ciel*, je reconnois Louis.”

None indeed carried every kind of adulation to a higher pitch than Lauzun, though he contrived to ally this subservient flattery to a degree of intem-

perate vehemence towards Louis himself, which often offended the monarch. He took care, however, that apparent repentance of the deepest and most devoted kind should always rapidly atone for his fault, and he thus generally contrived to draw from Louis something more than mere pardon.

His first progress at the court seems to have been owing to his intimacy with Madame de Montespan, even before she became the avowed mistress of the King; but he soon perceived that Louis was inclined to add to the list of his concubines the Princess de Monaco, sister of the Count de Guiche. Lauzun, who was her cousin, and at that time greatly attached to her, remonstrated with the King in terms of such daring rudeness, that Louis ordered him at once to be thrown into the Bastille.

Not knowing how common a character is that of a blunt hypocrite, Louis conceived a high opinion of the honesty of Lauzun, even from the insolence which he punished; and the Count, by suffering his beard to grow, and assuming all the airs of deep affliction for the offence he had given, taught the monarch to believe that he was devotedly attached to his person. He was speedily liberated, and from that time rose daily in favour with Louis, obtaining post after post as they became vacant, and even opposing and thwarting the overbearing Louvois himself.

At length he succeeded in attracting the attention of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, that princess

who had played so strange a part in the wars of the Fronde, who had aspired to share the throne of Louis XIV. himself, and who had been sought by many a sovereign prince. She still retained a certain degree of beauty, and possessed immense wealth as the heiress of Montpensier and Dombus, besides all that she derived from her father, Gaston, who had left no son.

Assured of her favour, the Count de Lauzun took means to prepare the mind of the King for the bold demand that was about to be made, and strongly engaged Madame de Montespan to second his views. He then induced the Duke de Montausier and the Maréchal d'Albret to proceed to the presence of the monarch, and in the name of the nobility of France to request him to consent to the marriage of Lauzun with the princess.

Louis, already determined by the representations of his mistress and his inclination towards the Count, did not hesitate; his consent was given; and had Lauzun profited by the moment of fortune, and concluded his marriage at once, his lot would have been strangely different from that which it became. Puffed up, however, by vanity and success, he procrastinated in order to celebrate his nuptials with all imaginable pomp. Mademoiselle, full of love and tenderness, prepared to strip herself of all her vast possessions in favour of her lover: the contract of marriage was drawn, and all was ready, when suddenly the King

withdrew his consent and forbade the ceremony.

Louvois, the princes of the blood, and all who envied the fortunes of Lauzun, had conspired together to overthrow his hopes ; and while he trifled away his time in preparations, representation after representation, and remonstrance following remonstrance, poured in upon Louis. Madame de Montespan even, there is reason to believe, was induced, by the arguments of one who was destined to rise still higher, to oppose the elevation of the Count de Lauzun ; and Louis, after having had the weakness to give his consent, had the baseness to withdraw it.

Placed in a ridiculous position, Louis, who had with unnecessary ostentation written to all friendly courts to announce the approaching marriage of his cousin, now wrote once more to explain his change of views, and a smile ran through Europe at the solemn farce which was enacting in the capital of France.

The affair, however, was destined to have more serious results, at least for Lauzun. Notwithstanding the prohibition of the King of France, he dared to unite himself to Mademoiselle de Montpensier by the bond of a secret marriage. That act, perhaps, might have passed unpunished, had he been wise enough to refrain from venting his indignation upon those who had opposed or betrayed him.

Madame de Montespan was the chief object of

his suspicion ; and he is said to have treated her in the presence of Louis himself with a degree of contumely and violence which was never to be forgiven. Wherever he went, his lips flowed with abuse of her ; he hid himself beneath her bed to overhear her conversation with the King, and it very soon became evident to all that he would drive her to work his ruin.*

The event thus anticipated was not long ere it took place, and Lauzun was arrested in November 1671, and sent to imprisonment at Pignerol, where he remained for ten years, the companion of Fouquet, who could scarcely be brought to believe that Lauzun,—whom he had looked upon, in his own

* Voltaire declares that the origin of the imputation upon Madame de Montespan for having occasioned or promoted the imprisonment of Lauzun is only to be found in the Segraisiana, which he looks upon with contempt : but Voltaire, though he may be accurate in his judgment of that work, is mistaken as to the fact. The authority upon which this accusation against Madame de Montespan rests is that of the Marquis de la Farre, who attributes to Madame Scarron, afterwards Madame de Maintenon, the part of persuading Madame de Montespan to oppose the marriage of Lauzun. He then declares that he had himself heard Lauzun abuse Madame de Montespan violently, and that he had in consequence told one of the Count's friends, " Your friend Lauzun is a lost man, who will not be six months longer at the court."

By the means which we have mentioned above, Lauzun obtained the certainty of Madame de Montespan's opposition, especially in regard to the post of grand master of the artillery, to which he aspired ; and that very night he is said to have whispered in her ear words of so gross and cutting a nature that she fainted in presence of the whole court.

days of prosperity, as an insignificant court-fly of no promise—was not mad when the Count informed him that he had received the King's consent to marry his sovereign's first cousin, and was punished for having married her after that consent had been withdrawn.

The fall of Lauzun left in the hands of Louis a great number of offices and appointments to be distributed to his courtiers. Amongst those who were thus destined to benefit by the disgrace of the favourite, was another courtier who had risen high in the esteem of Louis, although he had borne arms with his father against that monarch, and distinguished himself considerably in the civil wars. This was the Prince de Marsillac, son of the famous Duke de Rochefoucault, who, with less wit than his father, possessed a sort of grave politeness which accorded well with the character of Louis. The prince applied himself strenuously to efface from the mind of the king the evil impression left by his participation in the rebellion; but he did apply himself to that object with a degree of dignity and prudence which obtained from Louis something more than the pitiful meed of court favour.

Madame de Maintenon represents him as capable of all vice and deceit; but he was not only her decided enemy, but the opponent of her ambitious purposes; and the continued, unchanging regard of Louis, notwithstanding her hostility, is no slight

tribute to the honesty of Marsillac. Nor is the picture given by St. Simon unprejudiced ; but there is some cause for admiration when it can be shown that St. Simon himself had little to say against him. The government of Berri, which had been given to Lauzun, was now offered to Marsillac : he replied, however, that having been at enmity with the Count, he should be sorry to profit by his disgrace ; and it was only the express commands of the King which could induce him to accept the office.

To these courtiers was added, at a later period, one whom we shall however mention at present for a motive explained hereafter, though his fortunes were yet but in the bud. This was the well-known Duke d'Antin, the legitimate son of Madame de Montespan ; witty, talented, unprincipled, but possessing a peculiar grace, and, if we may use the term, a courtliness of mind, which distinguished him from all the other men of the court. Extraordinarily handsome, he preserved the fine masculine beauty which he derived both from his father and his mother to the very latest period of his existence ; and he was endowed, we are told by St. Simon, with every art that is necessary to captivate, to please, and to insinuate. He had almost every sort of talent also, and every quality of body and mind ; and to the last day of his life was capable of the most extraordinary and excessive fatigues, applying all his mental and corporeal powers to

show himself, to use the expression of St. Simon, "the most refined courtier of his time, and the most incomprehensibly assiduous."

His best quality, perhaps, was, that he never spoke ill of any one; but this was counterbalanced by so many meannesses, by such base flattery and pitiful subserviency, that even this good trait was looked upon rather as the effect of fear than of charity,—a weakness rather than a virtue. He was famous as an epicure, as a gambler, and as a coward; the latter, indeed, to such a degree, that we are assured it had become shameful to insult D'Antin. Nevertheless, he had great talent for war; and could his cowardice have been done away with, it was universally admitted he would have been one of the first generals of the age.

His whole attention, however, was to succeed by flattery; and that flattery extended not only to the King, but to all the King's favourites,—not only to all the King's favourites, but to all their favourites—to the valets of the King, and to the valets of the King's favourites. On the occasion of a visit paid to him at Petit Bourg by the King and Madame de Maintenon, he caused a complete account to be taken of her apartments at Versailles; the furniture, the books, the manner in which they were thrown upon the table, the very places in which they were marked; and, on entering the house of D'Antin, she found the suite of rooms prepared for her precisely in the same state

as those she had left. Besides this, everything had been done to afford amusement, pleasure, and comfort to every one that accompanied the court, from the very highest to the very lowest; and during the course of the day, D'Antin contrived to visit every one in his own chamber, down to the very valets, and to do the honours of his house to all. The King was much pleased with all that he beheld, and praised everything highly, except an alley of horse-chesnuts, which, though very beautiful in themselves, cut off the view from the King's apartments. The monarch remarked the fact to D'Antin; but the next morning, when he looked from the window, the trees were gone. Not the slightest trace of them existed, nor of the labour by which they had been removed. No one had heard any noise, no one had perceived any confusion; but the trees were gone, the ground smooth and even, and a beautiful view stretching out before the windows of the King. Madame de Maintenon repaid him for all his civility by a rude and bitter jest as she quitted his dwelling; but the King bestowed upon him, a fortnight after, the government of the Orleanois.

I have dwelt thus much upon the character of some of the courtiers of Louis XIV, because that character gave a tone to the court, and to the whole people in general. I do not mean to say that the idol was unworthy of the idolaters; but while Turenne and Condé, Créqui, Schomberg,

Luxembourg, and Duquesne, gave a peculiar tone to the early part of the reign of Louis XIV. in a military point of view; and Louvois, Colbert, D'Estrades, De Croissy, and D'Avaux worked out a new era in the external and internal policy of France, such men as La Feuillade, St. Aignan, Marsillac, Lauzun, and D'Antin effected a complete revolution in the feelings of society, in regard to the relations between sovereign and subjects; and at the end of twenty years it would have been impossible to conceive that the inhabitants of the French metropolis were the same people who had formed barricades and set fire to the Hôtel de Ville.

The powers and graces of Louis's mind and person, his success in arms and negotiation, the captivating brilliancy of all his undertakings, and the kingly air of all his actions, of course had a great share in producing the change; but, whereas at first we find that the French people obeyed the young monarch after he had taken the reins of government in his own hands, because they were tired of warfare, admired his person and feared his power, they are again found, before twenty years have passed, recognizing implicit obedience as a due which he has a right to demand, and regarding unquestioning submission as one of the first qualities of a French patriot.

In this the effect of Louis's court had as great a share as his own powers. His courtiers not only taught him himself to believe that a King of France

was born for unlimited command, but they led the people on to believe the same also ; and Louis certainly acted his part in impressing the lesson deeply into the hearts of the multitude in the most powerful and effectual manner.

We do not find indeed that his reign, even in that early portion of it to which we now allude, had been totally without internal disturbances, or that occasional resistance to the will of the monarch had not been made both by those who had their own interests especially at heart, and those who laboured for his and for the people's benefit. Colbert and Louvois both opposed the monarch on many occasions, though there was a remarkable and striking difference in the mode of their opposition, proceeding from the causes in which it originated in the breast of either.

Colbert's opposition to many of the King's designs began very shortly after his own accession to power ; was conducted with calmness, though with much determination ; and though there is reason to believe that he on more than one occasion besought the monarch to permit him to retire, he rather increased the King's esteem than diminished it by those demonstrations of firm adherence to his established principles.

Louvois, on the contrary, was all submission till he had attained such an ascendancy in the King's councils, and by the wars in which he aided to involve him, such a hold upon his passions, that he

believed Louis could not cast him off. He then opposed the monarch with rudeness and violence; presumed upon his own talents, and still more upon his master's generosity.

Colbert ever retained the regard of Louis, and was by him sincerely mourned; for the monarch felt and knew that his minister had served him with undeviating sincerity, and even in giving him pain had thought alone of his interest; and his honour. On the other hand, the King felt that Louvois, whether he opposed his wishes or ran on before them, sought his own interest, thought of his own power; and speaking of him many years after his death, Louis declared that he was "at all times insupportable."

Another minister must not be omitted unmentioned here, who perhaps did not oppose the will of the King, and in whom indeed the monarch could find but a trifling fault to account for his antipathy towards one who possessed many talents and many good qualities. Simon Arnaud, Marquis de Pomponne, was appointed minister, with the department of foreign affairs, in the year 1671. He had been at that time employed unceasingly for many years in negotiations at foreign courts, and had in various diplomatic capacities visited Naples, Spain, Holland, and Sweden. Endowed with much penetration and sagacity, he had acquired an intimate knowledge of the relations, interests, views, and characters of other monarchs,

which might have proved most beneficial to his own. He was mild and conciliating in his manners, rapid and clear in his combinations, and dexterous in his negotiations; but he had two great faults in the eyes of Louis. The first was not insignificant. He was not either sufficiently ambitious or interested to overcome a certain constitutional inactivity, a love of ease, tranquillity, and graceful retirement, which agreed not well with the monarch's demand for utter devotedness of every power to his service. Besides this, however, he was nephew of the famous Arnaud, the Jansenist, and very tolerant himself of those doctrines whereof his uncle was the most powerful defender. His modesty, his moderation, his virtues, his simplicity, his judgment, his information, his talents, were undoubted, but he was distasteful to the King; and Colbert as well as Louvois, both of whom often suffered under his superior knowledge of foreign policy in the council which they each sought to rule, saw that a slight fault would ruin him with the monarch. His carelessness of consequences soon gave the opportunity they looked for.

When Louis sent to demand for his son, in 1679, the hand of a Bavarian princess, the King waited with much anxiety for the final reply of the electoral court. Louvois had agents appointed to give him rapid intelligence; but Pomponne trusted to the ordinary channels, and, notwithstanding many warnings, went into the country to superintend his

plantations. The courier bearing the final intelligence arrived during his absence, and conveyed a decisive letter to Louvois. That minister hastened with the tidings to the King, who waited two days with eager impatience for the return of the minister for foreign affairs, and then signed his dismissal on the 18th of November 1679, which was signified to him on his return to Paris, with an order to retire from the court.

Colbert de Croissy, already celebrated as a negotiator, was immediately appointed in the room of Arnaud, at the solicitation of his brother, the famous controller of finance; and it is said that Louvois himself was outwitted by Colbert in this part of the business, having forgotten to suggest to the King a successor to Pomponne till his rival had obtained the office for his relation.

Louis was undoubtedly prejudiced against Pomponne, from his connexion with the Jansenists; but though such a prejudice was in itself a proof of weakness, he showed an atoning greatness of mind, in almost instantly suffering the minister to return to court, and in retaining him as one of his council, though he deprived him of the higher office.

In the remote provinces, Brittany had more than once been made the scene of tumult and confusion, and Normandy had occasionally shown a disposition to revolt. On one occasion the discontent of the latter province was taken advantage of, to his own ruin, by an unfortunate gentleman of

debauched manners' and unprincipled ambition, who had fallen from a prosperous and advancing condition into a state of misery and destitution which drove him to despair. This was Louis, Chevalier de Rohan, a member of one of the noblest families in France, who had cast away his advantages with the court, had covered himself with debts, and utterly ruined his prospects by debauchery. In this state he met with in Normandy a gentleman of the name of Hatréaumont,* like himself at the lowest ebb of fortune; and these two unhappy men conspired together, with the Chevalier Preaux and a Madame de Villers, for the purpose of introducing the Dutch into Normandy. They carried on a negotiation with the United Provinces, by means of a Flemish schoolmaster, settled in the neighbourhood of Paris, of the name of Vandenenden, formerly a Jesuit, who came and went between the French capital and the Low Countries.

The Chevalier de Rohan and his accomplices, who seem to have been very numerous, designed to organize a revolt in Normandy, and agreed to put the town of Quillebœuf into the hands of the Dutch, whose fleet hovered upon the coast for some time. The insurrection was upon the point of breaking forth, and Hatréaumont had set off for

* I find this name generally written Traumont; but in the records of the Bastille it is spelled as I have here placed it, as well as in the report of the trial.

Normandy to put himself at the head of the movement, when the whole conspiracy was discovered by the King, who at once caused the Chevalier de Rohan to be arrested at Versailles and thrown into the Bastille, and despatched Brissac, the major of his guards, to arrest Hatréaumont at Rouen. The latter was in bed when found by Brissac, who had been his former companion; but that officer foolishly suffered him to retire into a neighbouring cabinet for a moment, whence he came forth armed with a brace of pistols. One of these he instantly fired at Brissac; but the ball missed him, and wounded one of the *gardes du corps*. He then aimed the other at the officer, who, to show that he was not afraid, exclaimed aloud, "Fire!" upon which one of the guards, who was rushing up to seize the prisoner, conceived that the order was addressed to him, and shot him on the spot. He died shortly after, without having said anything which might compromise his accomplices.*

In consequence of the death of Hatréaumont without confession, the Chevalier de Rohan would in all probability have escaped without the punishment which was certainly due to his crimes, had not a most base and infamous deceit been put upon him, in order to induce him to confess his guilt.

The first intimation of the conspiracy, it would seem, had been acquired from some papers found in the baggage of the Count de Monterey, which

* La Parre. Bussy.

was taken after the battle of Senef; but the name of the Chevalier de Rohan was not so far implicated either by those papers, or by any that were found during the perquisitions in Normandy, as to afford legal proof of his guilt.

As soon as it was known that Hatréaumont had died without confession, the friends of Rohan proceeded to the Bastille by night, and endeavoured by means of speaking-trumpets to convey to the prisoner a knowledge of that fact. The chevalier did not hear them, however; and one of the judges, named Besons, held out to him a distinct promise of pardon on his making a full confession. He accordingly made a declaration of all he knew, and was extremely surprised to find his trial proceeded with as if no such act had taken place.

In the course of the various examinations, several things appeared, tending to criminate the Duc de Bourbon, one of the royal family. But it would seem that the victims were already selected; and by an order from the King, that part of the depositions which affected the Duke, as well as some words tending to throw imputations upon the character of the Electress of Bavaria, were effaced from the register.

The trial went on, directed throughout in all its forms and proceedings by the King himself, and certainly no moral proof of the guilt of Rohan, Preaux, Madame de Villers, and Vandennenden was wanting. All four were ultimately condemned to

death; and though the Chevalier de Rohan had expressed his surprise that the proceedings against him should go on after his confession, he seems not to have anticipated the result till sentence was actually pronounced upon him. Then, however, he was cast into paroxysms of rage and despair which were frightful to behold, and all the eloquence of the famous Bourdaloue was required to tranquillize and prepare him for death. Various efforts were made to move Louis XIV. to mercy, by former friends of the Chevalier de Rohan; but his own immediate family abandoned him. Louvois and Le Tellier strongly represented to the monarch that a more favourable instance could not have been found for displaying before the people an example of just rigour than in the case of a man loaded with crimes and vices, and crowning his follies and his faults by a distinct act of high treason.

Louis, it would appear, was very much inclined to grant him a pardon; but the arguments of his ministers prevailed, and the Chevalier de Rohan was accordingly executed, as well as Vandenenden, Madame de Villers, and the Chevalier Preaux.

This, we are assured, was the only unmixed example of an execution for high treason during the actual reign of Louis XIV;* and though unjust

* The execution of Dureteste must be considered altogether as the act of Mazarin; and besides, the crime of treason was only nominally that for which he suffered. Such also was the

means were employed to prove the guilt of the culprits, there can be no doubt substantial justice was done. The monarch, however, in other respects, showed a degree of just severity which proved highly beneficial. The course of justice, which had been so much perverted even in the capital, had been still more turned aside in the provinces; and in the remote districts, such as Auvergne, the jurisdiction of the various feudal lords had been employed for the basest and most tyrannical purposes. The tribunals themselves, remote from the seat of government, surrounded by powerful nobles, and filled by incompetent or corrupt judges, were far from giving protection or affording relief.

Louis, however, shortly after he had assumed the reins of government, determined to put a stop to the oppression exercised over his subjects in these particulars; and, even as far back as 1665, he established an ambulatory commission for examining into the malversation of justices in the provinces, and, placing the President de Morion at its head, sent it to commence its sittings in Auvergne.* A thousand crimes and acts of tyranny

case in regard to the executions which took place in the south of France, the charge of treason being in general, if not always, nothing more than a pretext to bring the accused within reach of the sword of the law. A claim to the honour of clemency has thus been set up at the expense of justice, truth, and equity.

* Bussy. Henault.

were discovered and punished during the sittings of the commission, which were called *Les grands jours*; and several heads were brought to the block which were considered in no danger at the commencement of the reign.

Other crimes, more horrible and more dangerous because far more difficult of detection, claimed the attention of Louis XIV. and his ministers very soon after the peace of Nimeguen. During the two or three years preceding various persons had died of maladies unknown, and strange rumours of poison having been used to hasten the death of any long-lived and troublesome friend, or dangerous and pertinacious enemy, began to be circulated in Paris, and to obtain a considerable degree of credit.

The death of Henrietta of England had presented so many suspicious circumstances, that, notwithstanding the expressed opinion of the surgeons, a strong impression remained upon the minds of the people of France that the charming princess of England had fallen a victim either to hatred or jealousy. It was natural to suppose that such events would leave behind them rumours of a similar kind affecting other persons, and that everybody who either died suddenly, or of a disease not clearly ascertained, would be supposed to have partaken of the same poisoned chalice which made such quick conveyance with the unfortunate Henrietta.

Whether Louis believed that such was the origin

of the rumours which were circulated in Paris, or whether he conceived it to be dangerous to investigate and display to the public eye all the particulars of a crime which has but too frequently engendered imitation when exposed, these reports, as long as they continued to be but reports, were left without investigation.

At length, however, it was revealed, under the seal of confession, to the Grand Penitentiary of Paris, that several persons really owed their death to that most base and cowardly kind of murder; and whether the priest's attention was distinctly pointed to any particular persons as authors of the crime, or whether some accidental cause of suspicion drew his eyes towards the individuals really implicated, I do not know; but it is certain that two Italians, one of whom was named Exili, were arrested on suspicion and placed in the Bastille. One of them died very soon after; but the other being convicted of nothing but the having sold empirical drugs for the cure of various diseases, and having practised astrology and divination, remained in the Bastille enjoying a considerable degree of liberty, and from the very prison to which his crimes had brought him, continued to pour forth upon the world the same dangerous secrets with which he had opened his career in Paris.

The first instance of the crime of poisoning, clearly proved and punished, was in the person of a young and beautiful woman, daughter of the Civil Lieu-

tenant Aubrai, who had married the Marquis de Brinvilliers. It would appear that the husband was less sensible to his own honour, than her parents to the honour of her family; and an intrigue having been discovered between her and a young gentleman of the name of St. Croix, her father obtained a *lettre de cachet*, by which the lover was transferred to the Bastille. St. Croix was there placed in the same chamber with Exili, and through his means Madame de Brinvilliers learned the horrid art of destroying in secret.

Considerable obscurity still hangs over the whole transaction, and what one author avers upon the subject another denies. It is clear, however, that either out of vengeance for the imprisonment of her lover, for the purpose of obtaining the estates of her family, which naturally descended to her brother, or from some other violent affection of the mind, which can scarcely be considered less than madness, Madame de Brinvilliers poisoned her father, her two brothers, and her sister.

She was accused also of committing the same crime upon a number of individuals totally unconnected with her in any degree, and even of having found a sort of insane pleasure in destroying the lives of her fellow-creatures, carrying poisoned cakes and food to the sick, in the hospitals, and distributing the same to the poor; but it would seem probable that her object in these latter acts was to ascertain the exact effect of the poisons she em-

ployed upon persons whose sudden death was not likely to create suspicion.

These facts having been discovered in consequence of an examination of the papers of St. Croix,* after his death, which took place by suffocation, whilst in the very act of preparing fresh poisons for the destruction of his fellow-creatures, Madame de Brinvilliers escaped from Paris, and wandered for some time in foreign countries. She was at length overtaken at Liège, and a general confession was found upon her, which, though it was not received as actual proof against her by her judges, furnished the means of discovering sufficient evidence of her crimes to convict her beyond all doubt. She was condemned in consequence, and was first decapitated and then burnt. But this awful example, far from deterring others from the same crime, only seemed to spread the madness with which it originated like an infectious disease throughout the people.

There can be no doubt that even before the death of Madame de Brinvilliers,† a number of persons had been engaged in the same practices; but after that event the crime became systematic. In the course of researches made by the rigorous

* See the proces verbal of the breaking of the seals at his house after his death.

† Anquetil calls her Countess of Brinvilliers; but, as far as I can discover, her real name was Marie Marguerite D'Aubrai, Marquise de Brinvilliers. The name of Gobelin is added before Brinvilliers in the Memoirs of the Bastille.

police of Paris regarding the characters of culprits charged with ordinary felonies, it was discovered that many of the habitual malefactors which swarm in all capitals lay under unproved accusations of poisoning, and stricter investigations were instituted in order to ascertain the extent to which the crime had been really carried. It was now discovered not only that it existed in Paris itself to a frightful extent, having begun amongst the higher classes, and thence extended to the lower ranks, but that it had spread to the country, and infected even the peasantry. Suspicion of a very grave kind attached strongly to a number of persons of elevated station and distinguished talents; but it appeared that the traffic in pernicious drugs was carried on by lower agents, and that a woman named La Voisin, together with a priest called Le Sage, and a person taking the name of La Vigoureux, made a regular trade of selling poisons to all who demanded them.

To cover this horrible traffic, divination and other pretended arts were practised for the discovery of secrets, for the recovery of things lost or concealed, and for the prediction of the future. Spirits were made to appear for the edification of the vulgar; the stars were consulted for those whose intellects were a degree more elevated; and persons, who ought to have had more good sense, were made complete dupes by a body of infamous impostors, whose only real skill seems to have been

displayed in enabling their fellow-creatures to commit the deepest crimes with impunity. This practice proceeded for nearly three years after the execution of Madame de Brinvilliers; but the sudden death, without any apparent cause, of a number of persons of high rank and great wealth, brought the affair to a crisis, which ended in the arrest of La Voisin, La Vigoureux, and more than forty of their accomplices.

Whether Louvois, whose star was now more in the ascendant than ever, saw from the first that he might employ the charge of poisoning or trafficking with poisoners as a means of avenging himself upon his enemies, or whether he merely used it afterwards as accident presented the occasion, it is certain that he was one of the first to press the King to take extraordinary measures to crush the extraordinary crime which had sprung up in Paris; and an irregular tribunal, called the *chambre ardente*, was appointed to investigate the whole affair, and to hold its sittings at the Arsenal.

This tribunal was constituted by a commission from the King, dated 7th April 1679, and consisted of eight councillors of state and six masters of requests, with the King's attorney-general of the Châtelet, to conduct the proceedings. The functions attributed to this commission were somewhat heterogeneous, and certainly left it sufficient space either to pursue crime or execute vengeance, comprising inquiries into all cases of poisoning, witch-

craft, impiety, sacrilege, profanation, and coining. The principal evidence obtained was derived from the compounders and retailers of the poisons themselves, of whom, a priest of the name of Stephen Guibourg, a man of seventy-one years of age, and almoner to the Count de Montgomery, seems by his own confession to have been the most depraved, profligate, and villanous.

• It is difficult, however, to ascertain what were really the crimes of which the accused were guilty; for these traffickers in poison seem to have been seized with a sort of madness, which induced them to fabricate, without any apparent motive, the most exaggerated and even absurd accounts of their own malefactions; as soon as they found that their real trade was discovered. Nothing, indeed, can paint in stronger colours the state of superstitious ignorance and depravity in which even the highest and most enlightened classes of society in Paris were then plunged than an examination of the trials before the *chambre ardente*. We find men not only of noble birth and great wealth, but even of distinguished genius, believing implicitly in sorcery, witchcraft, and enchantment; the ministers of religion debasing the holiest rites of the altar they were bound to serve to the most profligate and criminal purposes; and base and cowardly passions peeping forth from the bosoms of those reputed honourable and brave.

Many of the charges brought by the poisoners, however, were undoubtedly false. La Voisin and

her companions accused every one who had even consulted them in their fantastic capacity of diviners, of deeper crimes; and an immense multitude of persons were cited before the *chambre ardente*, charged with having employed the poison which they sold, and which bore the significant name of *powder of succession*. Many of these personages were of the highest distinction, but we shall pause to notice but a few of those who were cited before that tribunal. The first of these that we must speak of is the Duchess of Bouillon, the youngest of Mazarin's nieces. It would appear that she had visited the two women, La Voisin and La Vigoureux, in company with the Duke of Vendôme, merely from a weak motive of curiosity. The priest, Le Sage, performed some pitiful tricks of sleight of hand before her, but that was all that took place; and when she appeared before the court, she was surrounded by the most powerful nobles of the French metropolis, and answered the questions addressed to her with a degree of bold freedom which speedily established her innocence. Her examination ended by a reply which she made to one of the judges, who asked her if in any of her visits to the astrologers she had seen the devil. "I see him now," replied the Duchess, fixing her eyes on the judge. "He is very ugly and horrible, and is disguised as a councillor of state."*

* The reply is said by Voltaire to have been made to the celebrated Judge La Reynie; but such could not be the case.

No further questions were asked; but the sister of Madame de Bouillon did not seem to feel the same confidence in her own innocence. The famous Countess of Soissons, whom we have so frequently mentioned, had ever been the known enemy of Mademoiselle de La Vallière, was personally obnoxious to Madame de Montespan and to Louvois, and was remembered as the friend and companion of the beautiful and unfortunate Henrietta of England, over whose death so much mystery had ever hung. She was known to be daring, intriguing, and unscrupulous; and that she had carried on some commerce with La Voisin and her companions there could be no doubt. Various prejudices were therefore likely to operate against her in her trial; and the recollection of a former attachment induced Louis XIV. to send her word that if she felt herself culpable, he advised her to retire. She replied that she was innocent, but that she was not fond of being interrogated, and she consequently fled from Paris, and took refuge in Spain, where the daughter of her former friend Henrietta dwelt as Queen of Charles II.

as La Reynie was then merely Master of Requests. I may as well notice here the terms of high commendation in which La Reynie has been spoken of by various authors, as a just, upright, and incorruptible judge. The memoirs of the Bastille, however, show but in too many instances how pitiful could be his subserviency to the will of his despotic King, and prove that he dared not take a step in the pursuit of justice till he had received directions from above.

* The reputation of the Countess was by no means a recommendation at the court of Spain, and it is evident that the Spanish monarch entertained suspicions with regard to the death of his wife's mother, which made him very anxious to exclude the Countess of Soissons from the society of the Queen.

She laboured, however, and not without success, to overcome these prejudices, and ultimately a degree of intimacy took place between herself and both the royal personages, which, however, was soon terminated by the sudden death of the young queen, and the rapid flight of the Countess of Soissons from Madrid. It is said that the Queen had been imprudent enough to take a cup of milk from her hand, that Charles sent orders to arrest her, but found that everything having been prepared beforehand for departure, the Countess was gone. We are told, also, that he drove the Imperial minister from the Spanish capital, having remarked long before, that he was jealous of the influence of the French Princess, who had become Queen of Spain, and suspecting that he was accessory to her death.

Various other anecdotes are related in regard to this occurrence, which, like the above particulars, may be true or may be false;* but one thing is

* There are three or four versions of the history^{*} of the death of the Queen of Spain; but it is proved beyond a doubt that the belief in her having been poisoned was strong at the court of

clear, that strong and horrible suspicion attached to the Countess of Soissons from that moment, and that she wandered about Europe, shunned, feared, and hated till her death. That event took place at Brussels twenty-seven years afterwards, while her son, the famous Prince Eugene, was signalizing himself by victories over the armies of that King who had once been her lover. Eugene himself evidently contemned and despised his mother; and she, who had lived all the earlier part of her life in the most luxurious splendour, was suffered to die in her old age in poverty, if not in absolute want.

The third person, whose appearance before the *chambre ardente* we are bound to mention, was the celebrated Marshal Duke of Luxembourg, who had already distinguished himself by the vast services he had rendered to the crown. Nevertheless, in his capacity of general, he, like almost all other great officers, had quarrelled with Louvois, and the enmity of that minister was now made strangely conspicuous in the proceedings against him. It is true that La Voisin and her accomplices accused the Duke of a variety of follies, which was crowned by the charge of having attempted to destroy a person who had incurred his indignation; but at the same time the proceedings were carried on with such a

Madrid as well as at the court of Versailles. By one of the rumours current in that day in Spain we are led to believe that she was poisoned in some oysters by two French chambermaids.

degree of virulence that Louvois was strongly suspected not only of urging on the court, but of prompting the witnesses.

The Duke of Luxembourg showed a degree of weakness on his part, which was not expected from so proud and so firm a man. As a peer of France he not only had the right to appeal against the jurisdiction of the irregular court before which he was called, but was bound to himself and his brethren to do so. The parliament also should have interfered, but such was now the ascendancy of monarchical power, that the parliament took no step in the affair; and Luxembourg, waiving his right as a peer, voluntarily proceeded to the Bastille, and submitted to the jurisdiction of an illegal court.

During fourteen months, throughout which period his trial was protracted, he was debarred the use of pen and ink, and every resource of tyranny and injustice was exhausted, in order, if possible, to prove him guilty. From time to time he was brought up before the *chambre ardente*, interrogated and confronted with witnesses; but nothing could be proved against him, except that he had once seen the priest Le Sage, and had been weak enough to ask him to draw the horoscopes of various persons, for the gratification of an idle curiosity.

It appeared, indeed, that one of the Duke's men of business, named Bonard, having lost some papers belonging to his master, had been foolishly tempted to apply to the diviner for the purpose of recovering

them. It having then been discovered that they were in the hands of a girl named Dupin, various absurd ceremonies were employed in order to force her by supernatural means to return them. Those ceremonies of course proved ineffectual; but, on the trial, the priest Le Sage declared that Luxembourg had made application to Satan for the purpose of destroying the girl Dupin; and that he, Le Sage, and his companions had at length, by the Duke's order, assassinated her, cut her in quarters, and thrown her into the Seine. In confirmation of this accusation, full powers of attorney in favour of Bonard, signed by the Duke of Luxembourg, were produced in court; and in the last two lines of the document that great general made himself over to the devil in due form. Fortunately for him, however, on the power of attorney being strictly examined, it was found that those two lines were in a handwriting completely different from that in which the rest of the instrument was drawn up, and no doubt could remain in the mind of any one that they had been interpolated between the document itself and the signature, without the knowledge of the Duke.

Whether this had been done by the folly of Bonard, or the malice of Luxembourg's enemies, could never be discovered. The trial was concluded by the acquittal of the Duke;* but Luxembourg

* All preceding writers, I believe, without exception, have stated that the trial of Luxembourg was never formally con-

was punished severely for his indiscretion, by being kept in prison for fourteen months, while his trial proceeded, the greater part of which time he spent in a dungeon of the foulest description, only six feet and a half long. His life had nearly been the sacrifice, as he fell ill under the effects of confinement, and for some time was not expected to recover. He was set at liberty, however, immediately after his acquittal had taken place, and after retiring for a time from the court, he presented himself again before Louis, who, it was remarked, never spoke with him upon the past, but showed him no diminution of esteem. On the contrary, it would seem that he was afterwards more distinguished than before by the favour of the monarch, who perhaps felt that he had himself been highly criminal in suffering his great power to be abused by his minister, and permitting such acts of tyranny

cluded, but dropped of itself. I have with very great regret abstained in the present work from citing my authorities at the bottom of each page, as I have always done in other historical works; but as, in the present case, many really well-informed people might think that a mistake has been made in a statement so opposed to that of all Louis's historians, it is necessary to explain that I have found a recorded decree of the chamber of the Arsenal, dated 14th May 1680, by which the Duke is acquitted of the charge against him. The order of the King for the liberation of Luxembourg was given immediately, but coupled with a command to retire to one of his country houses, and not to approach within twenty leagues of Paris. Bonard, his intendant, was found guilty of several crimes, and condemned to the galleys.

to be perpetrated under the sanction of his name as the trial of the Duke of Luxembourg displayed.

It is seldom, indeed, that we find distinct and clearly-traced instances to prove that Louis himself abused the arbitrary power he had assumed, but still it must be remarked that of that arbitrary power he was fond, nor would yield the slightest portion of it for any consideration, so that he must be held morally responsible for all the tyranny and injustice exercised by others, to whom he communicated a portion of his authority. However much he might be disposed to ameliorate the laws, and to ensure the equal distribution of justice to his subjects in their relations with each other, he would bear no opposition to his own will; and that invaluable law, for which the parliament made a noble stand in the commencement of the troubles of the Fronde, and by which every French subject, on being put under arrest, was ordered to be brought before his natural judges within a certain period of time—that great, that excellent law, the shield and safe-guard of all civil liberty—was never heard of under Louis XIV. and was virtually abrogated by that monarch.

Upon his mind, the troubles of the Fronde, indeed, had produced the most detrimental effect; and, as is usual, the excesses of those persons who had made use of the sacred name of liberty as a cloak for their own base and turbulent passions, had served more than anything to injure liberty itself.

They had prepared the minds of the people to yield to despotism, by combining the idea of anarchy with the idea of freedom; and they had prepared the mind of the monarch to grasp and hold fast arbitrary power, by making him believe that liberty was the adversary instead of the supporter of all legitimate authority. The whole life of Louis shows that this was the impression upon his mind, but the most distinct expression of that feeling took place, when, in the year 1667, he went down to the parliament, and caused everything to be struck out of the registers concerning political affairs which had taken place between 1647 and 1652.

To return, however, to the transactions of the *chambre ardente*;—the poisoners and their accomplices, against whom their crimes were clearly established, suffered a just punishment, and were burnt in the Place de Grève. The effect proved salutary; for though rumours were still heard from time to time of similar crimes, it would appear that they were without foundation, and though the commission still continued to sit, its attention, we find, was chiefly turned to other affairs.

The same success attended the King's efforts to repress by wholesome severity the absurd and cowardly practice of duelling. Shortly after he had taken the reins of government into his own hands, various instances of that unchristian and idiotical custom took place, calling for a manifes-

tation of his determination to suppress it ; but that which seems to have moved the King the most was the famous combat of four against four, known by the name of the duel of La Frette, in which several men of the first distinction at the court, and some of his own especial friends and favourites, were engaged. He then announced publicly that he would never pardon a duellist who took the life of another, and he executed this purpose with such resolution, resisting all entreaties in favour of any culprit, however high, however distinguished, that a habit which had long been, and has since again become, the disgrace of civilized nations, was nearly put a stop to in France.

Happy had it been for that country had Louis always applied himself to such reformatations in the manners of his people ; happy had it been for himself and his subjects had he always listened to the wise counsels of Colbert, to whom the measures against duelling are generally attributed, instead of to the voice of Louvois, who prompted him to actions at once equally unjust and impolitic. During the whole of the first part of his reign, those two ministers stood on either side of him, like his good and evil genius. Each held up before his eyes a great and splendid object of ambition ; each poured into his ear, with the voice of eloquence, genius, and almost inspiration, counsels the most opposite to those of the other. The one spoke of

peace and prosperity, the other of war and victory. The one showed him the glory of laws reformed and improved, of arts encouraged and elevated, of a people maintained in industry and activity, of a nation blessed with plenty, tranquillity, and success; and, to yield a part to the weakness of human vanity, the good genius whispered, that all this might be combined with splendour and magnificence, and that the beneficent purpose of doing good to a whole race, might be forwarded by leaving glorious and everlasting monuments of taste, genius, and exertion to after-ages. The other held out before him the glory of enemies overcome, of nations conquered, of kingdoms added to kingdoms, of fleets sweeping the seas, of armies carrying the terrors of his name over fields of conquest into other lands, of a fame in history amongst the conquerors of the earth, of the majesty of dictating laws to other princes, of the triumph of reducing all within his own realm to implicit obedience, and of the pride of seeing the civilized world wait his nod, and tremble at his frown.

Pomp, and pageantry, and splendour were called in to swell the attractions of the worst objects; and all things which could stimulate human vanity or gratify human pride, were sought as accessories to allurements already too powerful. Louis listened, and followed his evil genius, though some high qualities naturally belonging to his heart, caused

him to cling with ineffectual longing to the better spirit, as if he would fain have dragged him along with him upon the course suggested by the other.

In no points, perhaps, were the opinions and counsels of Colbert and Louvois more directly opposed than with regard to the conduct which Louis ought to hold towards the large body of his Protestant subjects. The King himself, without being superstitious, was decidedly fanatical, and had shown from his youth the strongest disposition to bigotry. The despotic character of his mind taught him to seek by all means to render the general opinions of his subject subservient to his own. In his ordinary commerce with those about him, a natural mildness of disposition, joined to native dignity of character, obviated this defect, and he would bear contradiction as a man—even rudeness and insolence very often—with the utmost calmness and urbanity, when he would suffer no opposition as a king, nor would support the resistance of masses of his subjects, though he would endure with dignified placability much irritating opposition from individuals.

La Rochefoucault often contradicted him; Colbert, Turenne, Madame de Maintenon often opposed and blamed him; Louvois resisted his will with insolent arrogance, Lauzun reproached him with brutal impudence, and Villiers assailed the tastes which were thought all-perfect, and the whims which were fancied proofs of magnificence

and genius, with ridicule and contempt. But in all these instances, and many others which could be named, the King bore all with patience and moderation that could hardly have been expected at the very time when he was, step by step, with cunning policy clearing the way for cruel zeal, throwing down the last barriers raised to protect religious freedom in France, and preparing to carry the apostate-making sword of intolerance to the dwellings of some of the most innocent and industrious of his subjects.

There is every cause, indeed, to believe that in dealing with the Protestants, as with any other body of his people that presumed to differ with him, he acted upon principle, though that principle was unjust, despotic, and impolitic.

Richelieu, during the whole period of his power, had laboured to reduce the number and the influence of the Protestants of France, not from any bigoted hatred of their religion, to which, in all probability, he was perfectly indifferent, but simply because he considered them a seditious, dissatisfied, and turbulent portion of the community, which impeded the march of government, and destroyed the uniformity of his general scheme of authority. Louis XIII. looked upon them in the same light, but he added to the motives which induced Richelieu to repress them, all that could influence a zealous and eager Catholic. Mazarin, although at the commencement of his power he had seemed in some

degree to court the Protestants, had afterwards shown a disposition to proceed in the steps of Richelieu. Louis XIV. went far beyond either, and urged on by Louvois and Le Tellier, the latter of whom was bigoted in the highest degree, now proceeded step by step towards the utter suppression of the Protestant faith in his dominions.

Colbert, there is every reason to believe, did all that he could to oppose the unjust and impolitic measures which were proposed against the Protestants; but he was not able to effect anything, except to slacken, in some degree, the march of that persecution which was destined ultimately to overwhelm them.

Madame de Maintenon, then rising daily into favour, notwithstanding the usual zeal of apostates, disapproved of the measures adopted against the adherents of a faith in which she had been educated herself, and, if we may give credit to her letters, endeavoured to stay the steps of persecution, while she followed eagerly those of persuasion, perhaps of corruption, to arrive at the same result. But Madame de Maintenon's lingering affection for her former sect was opposed even in her own breast by her fanatical devotion to her later creed; and unanswerable arguments were always ready on the part of the King to silence the advocacy of tolerance towards heretics in the mouth of a pious proselyte to the Roman Church, especially when her own ambitious views might have been crossed by too

bold ~~an~~ intervention in favour of her Huguenot friends. She does not scruple to admit, in more than one of her celebrated epistles, that she is forced to countenance acts that she could not approve for fear of being suspected of a lingering attachment to protestantism, which attachment would, of course, have ruined her in the opinion of the King; and thus her powerful influence was withheld in a matter where it might have been employed, perhaps, with great effect under other circumstances.

Gradually, but still not slowly, Louis prepared for that famous revocation of the edict of Nantes which deprived him of a number of his most industrious subjects, and cast an imputation of general cruelty and injustice upon his reign, of which it would otherwise have been free. He began by employing persons to interpret the edict of Nantes in a manner totally contrary to its spirit and its letter, and there wanted not jesuitical casuists who succeeded admirably in the attempt. Every means were then employed to make converts. Money, honours, favours, were held out to all who would embrace the Catholic religion.

Perhaps this might not be considered wrong or unjust in a monarch who conceived he was saving souls by the influence of such inducements; but when he introduced dissension into families, when he freed children from the restraint of their parents, and delivered debtors from the obliga-

tions to their creditors, the justice of his proceedings became more than doubtful. Gross and notorious injustice speedily followed. Exclusion from various offices was denounced against the Huguenots. At first, public offices of high importance, and at length all functions connected with the state, were denied to Protestants. All municipal posts, and even, in the end, the freedom of all corporate trades, were refused them. The bar, from the highest to the lowest offices, was shut against them; and following up this principle, those who had been previously admitted to any rights, privileges, or situations of trust, were compelled to resign them.

But one of the most severe and decided blows which the unfortunate Huguenots received, was the suppression of what was called the "Chamber of the Edict." This court had been established by the Edict of Nantes for the judgment of causes between Protestants and Catholics, and in each of the provincial parliaments a chamber had been appointed, consisting half of Protestants and half of Catholics; while in the chamber of that name in Paris six Huguenots and ten Catholics gave a preponderance to the latter, which, however, had never been very flagrantly abused. Before the time we speak of, however, five of the Protestant members had been removed from that court, and distributed amongst the other inferior tribunals; and on the 21st of January, 1669, appeared a decree of the King suppressing the Chamber of the Edict in all the par-

liaments of the realm. The Protestants, however, were still assured that it was all for their own good that these steps were taken, and that it was more advantageous for them to be judged by Catholics than by a mixed body, the very diversity of opinion existing in which, upon one subject, might produce contentions and difficulties on others, when the Protestants could derive no real benefit from appointing a single member to a large body. The unhappy Huguenots were not easily persuaded to believe this doctrine ; and the rapid measures which were thenceforth adopted against them soon showed the intention of the government to compel them to abandon their religion. The number of the churches which they had been allowed to maintain was diminished ; no strangers, no foreigners, were permitted to enter the reformed church in France. The Huguenot clergy were forbidden to wear any ecclesiastical habit, to call themselves the ministers of the word of God, or to name their religion “ the Reformed,” without preceding that term with the word “ pretended.”

One act after another drove them to despair ; and, while Pelisson, himself a convert to the Catholic church, busied himself with renegado zeal in buying proselytes to the faith of the court, it was declared in 1681, that Huguenot children at seven years old were competent to make a renunciation of their religion, and the most severe pains and penalties were pronounced against those who should

relapse into their heresy. The clergy were forbidden to visit the sick or the prisoner, for fear of impeding conversion ; and marriage, baptism, and burial were obliged to be performed almost in secret. The consistory and synods were restricted in their functions, and rendered less frequent ; colleges and schools were shut up ; many objects of necessary instruction were forbidden to be taught by Protestant schoolmasters, and everything, in short, was done to render the exercise of the Protestant religion inconvenient, degrading, intolerable. The natural consequences, of course, ensued ; the Protestants of France began to emigrate to other countries.* Then came edicts of proscription, confiscation of property, and the most brutal cruelties exercised upon those who were supposed to entertain the intention of making their escape. Some movements of revolt were the consequence, especially in the Vivarais and in Dauphinè. The Protestant peasantry assembled in several places in 1682, and showed a disposition to resist. Their preachers addressed them in the open air, because the temples in which they had been accustomed to meet were now destroyed ; and the scenes afterwards enacted against the Covenanters of Scotland were only upon the model of those which now took place upon the banks of the Rhone.

* The emigrations commenced long before the absolute revocation of the edict of Nantes ; but the edict was virtually revoked long before.

A strong line of troops, embracing an extensive area, was drawn round the scene of resistance ; the circle was gradually contracted, all the corps directing their movements towards a common centre, and manœuvres were practised to hem in the unfortunate Protestants, which have been justly compared to those of a great hunting party.

The assembled Huguenots were attacked, cut to pieces, and dispersed ; and the Huguenot ministers who were caught, were broken on the wheel without mercy. Parties of troops were sent to the Protestant districts throughout the whole country, and, led on by the Catholic priests, committed every sort of injustice, of brutal cruelty, and of villany, which it is possible to conceive. These measures, as well as those which followed the revocation of the edict of Nantes, are known in history by the name of Dragonades ; and every sanctity of domestic life, every law, divine and human, was violated by the brutal soldiery, who were sent as a scourge to drive the Protestants to abandon the faith of their fathers. The dragoons, indeed, were, throughout all these transactions, forbidden to slay the unresisting, but they did slay by more cruel means than even by the sword ; while Louvois ceased not, from the haunts of luxury and debauchery in which he passed the hours of peace, to write exhortations to those who commanded in the provinces to use the last extremities towards the Protestants who remained refractory ; and the annals of the prisons of

France display the zeal, the ferocity, the cunning, and the cruelty of the higher and lower agents of conversion.*

At length, on the 22nd of October 1685, appeared an edict revoking the edict of Nantes. It is composed of eleven articles, by the first of which, all privileges granted to the Protestants by preceding kings are suppressed. The two next forbid the exercise of the reformed religion throughout France; others command all ministers of that faith to quit France within fifteen days, offer rewards for conversion, forbid the holding of schools by Protestants, and enjoin parents to bring up their children in the Catholic faith. The only one merciful clause which the whole act contains is that which promises to the Protestants the petty grace of remaining unmolested in their houses and goods, provided they cease altogether from the open exercise of their religion.

Such was the disgraceful act by which Louis XIV. concluded a long series of tyrannical oppressions committed against a body of his subjects the most industrious, and, under his reign at least, the most tranquil of any class amongst his people.

* Of course, it is only possible here to enter into general statements, but there were individual instances of aggravated cruelty and injustice scarcely to be believed. Various treaties had been entered into with particular cities, and the case of Sedan (Sir J. Peyron) shows how every engagement and every law of policy, morality, religion, humanity, and good feeling, could be violated even in an enlightened and polished age.

They fled on every side, and in vain Louvois endeavoured to guard the frontier, in vain flight was forbidden on pain of death and confiscation ; the Dutch, the Germans, the English, all called the Protestants of France to their separate countries as friends and brothers, and all the peculiar arts and branches of industry which the Protestants had exercised amongst themselves in France were carried to other shores, and lost for ever to the land that persecuted them. At a later period, even in the middle of the eighteenth century, a personage, called the Abbè de Caveirac, was found bold enough, by a series of sophisms, to apologize for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes ; but his work requires no refutation, especially here, and he himself sufficiently indicated the character of his reasoning by adding to his apology for Louis XIV. a treatise, intended to palliate the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day.

Exaggeration has been used on both sides in regard to the number of Protestants who effected their escape from France, but, probably, the estimate formed by Voltaire is correct, and that about fifty thousand families, or between two hundred thousand and three hundred thousand souls, expatriated themselves on this melancholy occasion. Basnage says between three hundred thousand and four hundred thousand, and La Martinière three hundred thousand. Whatever was the number, there can be no doubt that the loss to France was

great, and that the evils ensuing from the severities exercised towards the Protestants were even more important than Colbert had foreseen.

That great minister, however, did not live to witness the consummation or the consequences of Louvois's bad counsel against the Protestants. He had struggled vigorously to support the exhausting war which Louis had carried on against all the powers of Europe; and though he boldly represented to the King the ruinous consequences of his great military undertakings, the necessity of peace, and the embarrassments that were again creeping into the finances; though he had laid before the King in 1678 and 1679 a true and striking picture of the existing state of France when compared with that which it had enjoyed before the war, and had even tendered the resignation of his office to give his remonstrances greater effect, he had never suffered the King to know even a temporary financial difficulty, and had provided means to the last for carrying on the war with vigour, and of buying the mercenary leaders in foreign countries to grant a peace advantageous to France. To effect this, however, he had been obliged to have recourse to many, if not all, of those measures which he had before condemned, the sale of offices, and the creation of new rentes or loans, and had even been compelled to employ those very farmers of the public revenue whom he had treated so severely, and against whom

there still existed decrees of the most threatening nature.

At length, however, his health gave way, and we may well suppose that grief to see all his best schemes for promoting the prosperity of his native country overthrown, had contributed not a little to injure his constitution. During the years 1681 and 1682 his strength visibly declined,* but he continued to labour indefatigably for the good of the state till, at length, in the middle of 1683, a violent attack of the stone forced him to cease from the execution of his duties. Louis, as soon as he heard of his illness, hastened from Versailles, and proceeded to visit him at his own house, leaving all the splendid train which accompanied him without. He sat some time by the bedside of his dying minister, and expressed eager wishes which were sincere, and hopes which were fallacious, for the recovery of Colbert. The only tear which the approach of death, and the severing of all worldly bonds, drew from the eyes of Colbert, arose in them at the kind words of his sovereign. With this balm he closed his eyes, and, shortly after the King's visit, died on the 6th September 1683. Louis XIV. acquired the name of Great during his life, and

* The priest, Guibourg, on his examination regarding the affair of the poison, acknowledged that he had furnished a person named Damy with drugs for the purpose of destroying Colbert, and that those drugs had been actually swallowed by the minister, producing only a slight illness.

did not preserve the title. On Colbert it was bestowed after his death, and will remain with him for ever.*

Little doubt can exist upon the mind of any man whose views of eminence are founded upon the principle that beneficence is an inherent part of greatness, that Colbert was one of the greatest ministers, if not one of the greatest men, that ever lived. That he committed errors, that he had faults, is undeniable, for he was a man; but that his designs were for the good of his fellow-creatures, and that those designs were guided and executed with infinite sagacity, is clear from every record of his administration. We have already spoken of his efforts at large, and it may be equally unnecessary to touch upon them again here, even for the purpose of pointing out that his mind was as comprehensive and vast in its views as laborious and accurate in its details, as to dwell upon the petty

* It is to be remarked that, in his own day, Colbert was by no means loved by the people in general. He had offended large classes whose interests, as well as their passions, led them to defame his character and assail his measures. His death called forth innumerable satires and epigrams, all very flat and common-place, it is true, but marking strongly the feeling of the Parisians towards him. I have eighteen of these pieces under my eye at this moment, and amongst them not two that are worth transcription. The best, perhaps, is the following:—

Caron, voyant Colbert sur son rivage,
Le prend et le noie aussitôt
De peur qu'il ne mette un impôt,
Sur la barque et sur le passage.

faults or failings which chequered the character of that extraordinary man. That he claimed, without possessing, the honour of high ancestry; that he aspired to become chancellor, and in vain studied the Latin language, which he had not previously learned, are amongst the small scandals of the day that are scarcely worthy of investigation. But there are two great political errors attributed to him, which it is necessary to notice in this place; the first is, that he not only did not encourage the exportation of corn from France, but did not perceive that the want of a market for superfluous production tended to a dangerous decrease of supply, while by opening the trade, yet binding it by certain conditions, he might have insured that none but the superfluity should be exported.

It was not to be expected, however, that Colbert, who was in fact the first great practical political economist that the world ever saw, should be conversant with every part of a science then in its complete infancy, and which has not yet arrived at maturity. The difficulty of correcting the variations of supply by any laws regarding exportation is still in some degree a problem; but even had the mind of Colbert solved it in his own day, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the prejudices of all the rest of the world, especially in his own country, where a famine had lately been the consequence of an ill-regulated traffic in grain, would have obstructed

him at every step, and in all probability would ultimately have foiled his endeavours.

Another accusation brought against him was, that he encouraged in the King the taste for building, and for all those expensive and magnificent constructions which marked the reign of Louis XIV. in the history of the arts.

The Palace of Versailles, begun while Colbert was the director of public buildings, the splendour, the richness, and the costly bad taste of which are too well known to need description or detail in this place, has been called the gulf into which the revenues of France were poured never to return. But this is a pitiful and narrow view of the subject; the sums expended on such buildings, the money spent upon the encouragement of arts, science, and industry of every kind, did return, not alone as the principal sum, but bearing interest of an extraordinary amount, in the employment of the people, and the rapid circulation of capital.

The gulf, the real gulf, into which the revenues of France were poured never to return, was the abyss of foreign wars, and fruitless conquests, and efforts to aggrandize one family and one man. Such was the gulf into which the revenues of France were poured by Louis XIV; but the splendid buildings of Versailles,* the labour and expense

* The expense of Versailles was certainly very great, but it was almost entirely poured back into the hands of the people of France as the price of labour and production. Very little

bestowed upon the construction of water-works, the laying out of gardens, the casting of statues, the painting of pictures, the hewing of the marble, and the weaving of the tapestry, would never have been felt, or felt only as a benefit, had there not been other contemporary drains which carried the wealth of the kingdom beyond its limits, and spent the revenue of the state while they diminished the industry of the people.

Having noticed the building of Versailles, it may be as well to speak in this place of the institution of the Royal Hospital of Invalides, which was suggested by Colbert's rival, Louvois, and commenced in the year 1671.

Previous to that time almost all the abbeys under the King's nomination had been, by a very ancient custom in the French church, bound to support a certain number of lay brethren, appointed by the monarch, and who were generally chosen from the wounded and maimed soldiers in the service of France. This due had been converted into a pension payable from the revenues of the abbeys,

but a portion of the marble was brought from any other country, and though in the week ending on the 26th August 1684, we find that the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand francs had been laid out on the park and the palace, yet twenty-two thousand men had been employed in the exertion of their best faculties. It was, in fact, an army employed in construction within the realm, instead of in destruction without, gaining money by innocent labour, instead of unnecessary slaughter, and spending it amongst their fellow-countrymen, instead of amongst strangers.

and these pensions were now diverted to the support of the Hôtel des Invalides.

It has been objected to this institution, that much more good might have been done by establishing it upon a less magnificent scale, and at a distance from the capital, where the difference in the price of provisions would have enabled a much greater number of invalids to be received. The moral effect of the institution, however, would have been greatly diminished; and there is every reason to believe that both Louis and Louvois looked to that moral effect as their principal object. Other objections have been urged against the Invalides both in former times and in the present, when the spirit of the age has, if I may so term it, an entirely material and mechanical tendency. The institution, however, will always be looked upon as a magnificent one by every person who does not entirely deal with the feelings of the heart, and the movements of the mind, as a matter of narrow calculation.

In one point of view, both the building of Versailles and that of the Invalides co-operated strongly in producing a frame of mind in the French people favourable to all the chief objects which Louis XIV. proposed to himself. It was necessary to him, and must be to every sovereign of France, to identify himself with the glory of the nation, or in other words to weave the vanity of the French people so intimately in the same web with his own purposes,

that the two cannot be separated, and that every effort made for his own gratification may tend at the same time to satisfy their self-esteem.

The splendour of the monarch's court, the magnificence of his undertakings, the gorgeous richness of Versailles, all aided, together with his victories and successes in the field and the cabinet, to make the French people vain of being the subjects of such a King. They saw ambassadors not only from every European nation, but from the most remote parts of the earth, thronging to his court; and they fancied that their country was the centre of all Europe, their metropolis the capital of the whole world.

The wonder and the surprise displayed by the rude African, or the curious Siamese, gave them, we learn, intense pleasure; and even in the celebrated reply of the Doge of Genoa they contrived to find out something flattering, though it was in fact an indirect reproof.

The sovereign of that city paid a compelled visit to the court of France in the year 1685, and was shown over all the wonders of Versailles by two proud and ostentatious guides, Colbert de Croissy and the young Marquis of Segnelai. The grave face with which the Doge regarded everything struck his conductors, and induced Segnelai to put to him a somewhat extraordinary, and not very polite question. He asked if the Doge was not surprised at the magnificence of all the things he

saw ; but the ideas of that prince turned at once to his own city of palaces, and he replied that the only thing that surprised him was to find himself there.*

* The particulars of the Doge's visit, and the cause thereof, will be noticed hereafter, as well as the coming of envoys from Spain.

CHAPTER II.

Early History and Character of Madame de Maintenon — Her first acquaintance and connection with Madame de Montespan — Their disputes. — She detaches Louis from Madame de Montespan. — Intrigues of the Court. — Scandals revived. — Fall of Madame de Montespan. — Death of the Queen. — Marriage of Madame de Maintenon to the King.

WE now come to speak of what may be considered the last epoch of the life of Louis XIV, though not properly the last epoch of his reign, for there is a considerable distinction to be made between the two, the period of the monarch's decline as a man having commenced considerably earlier than the decline of his power and influence as a potentate. With this period of his life is intimately connected the history of a woman extraordinary in many respects, but in none more than in the vicissitudes of fortune, through which she was led from a prison to a palace, and from the bed of a coarse and vulgar buffoon to the bed of a haughty and polished sovereign. I speak of the famous Françoise d'Aubigné, Marchioness of Maintenon, on whose history I must now pause, as not only one of the most extraordinary known, but also as most intimately connected with the whole after-conduct of Louis XIV.

Madame de Maintenon was born in the prison of Niort on the 27th of November 1635, nearly three years before the birth of Louis himself. Her father, Constant d'Aubigné, throughout was a man of a rash, wild, and dissolute character, and was at that time a prisoner. She was baptized by a Catholic priest, and the Duke of Rochefoucauld acted as godfather. Her father's sister, Madame de Villette, took charge of her early years; but while she was yet in infancy, her father was conveyed from Niort to the Chateau Trompette, at Bourdeaux, whither she accompanied him, and she remained there till the end of 1639, at which time her father was liberated on an extorted promise of embracing Catholicism. Not choosing to fulfil that engagement, however, he fled to Martinique, accompanied by his wife and children, and in the voyage the child was seized with a fever, which soon reduced her to the gates of death. She was even for some time supposed to be dead, and preparations were made for consigning the body to the ocean, when her mother perceived that life was not extinct, and took means to resuscitate her child. The presence of Madame d'Aubigné, a woman, calm, firm, and devoted, withheld her husband for a considerable time from the vices and excesses of which he had previously been guilty. The property which he had in Martinique was sufficient for their subsistence; but Madame d'Aubigné being forced to return to

France for the recovery of some property, her husband once more sought the gaming table, and lost everything that he possessed.

Madame d'Aubigné bore all reverses with fortitude, and as she had no fortune to give her daughter, she devoted herself to cultivate her mind, and to implant those high principles in her bosom which might arm her against temptation in circumstances of danger and difficulty. In 1645, Francoise d'Aubigne lost her father,—if his death could be called a loss,—and shortly after returned to France, where absolute necessity of the most painful kind obliged her mother to confide her to the care of her husband's sister, Madame de Villette, who lost not a moment in converting her to the religion of her fathers. Thus become a Protestant, Mademoiselle d'Aubigne's task now became to distribute the alms which her virtuous and charitable aunt bestowed with a liberal hand upon the less fortunate persons of her neighbourhood, and for Madame de Villette herself—notwithstanding one or two acts of ungenerous fanaticism committed by that lady—she retained, during life, the greatest veneration. She was not suffered, however, to remain long with her Protestant relation. Her mother, stedfastly attached to the Roman Catholic faith, looked upon the salvation of her child as hopeless in any other creed but her own; and as the system of conversion was at that time in high vogue, especially with Anne

of Austria, some of the Catholic connexions of the unfortunate girl were soon interested sufficiently in her fate to withdraw her from the happy home which she had found. The active agent in this business was the Countess de Neuillant, who, from her husband having been governor of Niort at the birth of Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, had become her godmother, and who consequently considered herself, justly in some degree, responsible for the religious opinions of her god-daughter. It is probable, however, that being, as she is represented to us by Saint Simon, "avarice itself," she would have taken little heed of this duty, had it not been likely to promote her interest with the court.

Her eldest daughter had married the Duke of Navailles, had shown herself attached to Anne of Austria, and had won the regard of that Princess, while her husband, the Duke, had made himself serviceable and agreeable to Mazarin. Under these circumstances, it cannot be doubted that Madame de Neuillant imagined she should recommend herself to the court, to which her daughter was attached, by converting this young scion of a noble but decayed Protestant family; and she therefore obtained, both from the mother of the young lady and from the French court, authority to take Françoise d'Aubigné from the care of her aunt La Villette. No sooner had she obtained possession of her person than she employed every means justifiable and unjustifiable to bring her back to the

Roman Catholic religion. Having resisted all the efforts of her persecuting patrons, the poor girl was subjected, as a punishment, to the most menial occupations ; the hay and straw for the horses were given out by her hands, and from them also the poultry received their food. She was accustomed to say in after-life, that her reign had commenced by the government of the farm-yard ; but as she still maintained her adherence to the religion of her father, she was at length placed in the Ursuline convent of Niort, where means of conversion were employed, the nature of which we do not know, but which at length induced her to abandon the Protestant and embrace the Catholic religion. No sooner had she publicly recanted, than her aunt, Madame de Villette, refused to afford her any further pecuniary support ; the Ursulines would not keep a person who could pay them nothing ; and Madame de Neuillant, having contrived to convert her, was quite satisfied with that work of charity without allowing her purse to suffer in favour of her proselyte. The unhappy girl was therefore obliged to increase the poverty of her mother by the addition of her own necessities.

Madame d'Aubigné at that time was nearly destitute, gaining a scanty subsistence with her own hands, and receiving nothing from the family of her husband but a pitiful annuity of two hundred livres. Long anxieties, care, disappointment, and fatigues brought her shortly to the grave, which

took place not long after the return of her daughter, and after the death of her husband's sister, Madame de Villette. Thus, at a very early age she left her child with no dowry but beauty and talents, in the midst of a world where such things as friends are scarce, and without any relation whose protection or support she could claim.

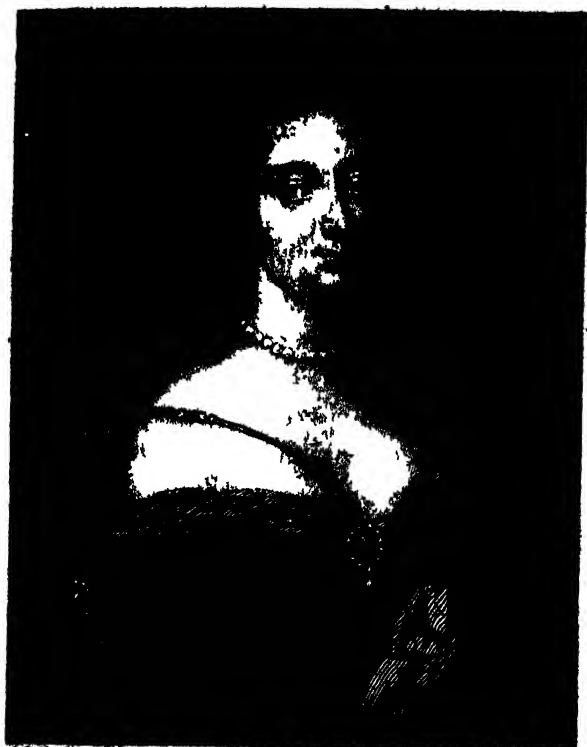
After having remained for three months shut up in a small room at Niort, Mademoiselle d'Aubigné was once more sought out by Madame de Neuillant, who, partly ashamed of suffering her god-daughter and her proselyte to want, partly desirous, it would seem, of having some human object for the exercise of petty tyranny, again took the unhappy girl under her charge, and put her for a time to an Ursuline convent in Paris. We find that Mademoiselle de Aubigné accompanied her more than once to the capital; and at her house, the graces, the wit, and the accomplishments of the young orphan soon attracted the attention of several persons of distinction in Paris. Among the rest were Mademoiselle de St. Hermant, the Chevalier de Meré, and the famous Scarron. The Chevalier, who was a friend, and in some degree a favourite of Mazarin, but vain, affected, and stiff, took upon him to initiate the young Indian, as he called Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, into all the etiquettes of the beaumonde of Paris. The Abbé Scarron was a person entirely of a different character, gross, coarse, and filthy in his writings, and often so in his conversation. De-

formed, impotent, and full of infirmities, he possessed, as some compensation for corporeal misery and mental coarseness, a warm and ardent heart, and a quick and ready humour, which sometimes reached the elevation of wit, and always passed for wit even when it did not attain that point. At his house almost all the men of talent and high spirits in Paris were accustomed to meet, and a number of ladies of good reputation did not scruple to frequent the society of Scarron, although their ears were likely to be saluted by conversation neither very delicate in expression or very virtuous in tendency. To his dwelling, Mademoiselle d'Aubigné was taken before she had reached fifteen years of age, and we learn from one of the letters of Scarron himself that, as if a presentiment of her future fate had struck her, she burst into tears on entering his apartment.

The deformed Abbé, who was accustomed to say of himself, that "nature had made him of the scrapings of her pot," was not by any means insensible to personal beauty, and he seems from the first to have been very much struck with the young orphan of Niort. A letter addressed from Mademoiselle d'Aubigné to Mademoiselle de St. Hermant, after the former had quitted Paris for a time, brought on a letter from Scarron, and a regular correspondence ensued between him and his future wife. It has been generally asserted that compassion was the only motive of Scarron in proposing at

length to marry his young favourite; but all his letters to her breathe an ardent and impassioned spirit of a very different character, and no one can read them attentively without being convinced that, notwithstanding his infirmities, Scarron was, what is termed, in love with Mademoiselle d'Aubigné. Perhaps the only serious verses which Scarron ever wrote are addressed to her, and the Chevalier de Meré himself, it would appear, followed the fashion of falling in love with the young orphan as far as he could love anything but himself. At length, on the return of Mademoiselle d'Aubigné to Paris, Scarron, touched with the dependant situation in which she was placed, and grieved at all that she suffered, generously offered either to marry her or to give her a dowry if she chose to marry any other person. She was already, however, pleased with his wit, moved by his attachment and kindness of heart, and touched by his generosity, and she does not seem to have hesitated in regard to her choice. To Scarron, then, she was married in the year 1651, being at that time in the sixteenth year of her age, and with him she lived for nearly nine years, till his death, which took place on the 14th of October 1660.

It would be a painful, and probably unsatisfactory, task to examine minutely, at this distant period of time, what was the real conduct of Madame Scarron during her union with her husband, and to confront the various accounts which have been



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given of her demeanour at that period. She was then extremely beautiful, graceful, witty, and, in general, prudent; and there can be little doubt that she contributed greatly to purify the conversation and soften the grossness of manners in the literary meetings which almost nightly took place at her husband's house. Of course, at an after period of the reign of Louis XIV. when her power and influence extended over everything, and when flattery to her was refined flattery to the monarch, everything that could tend to cast a stain upon the character of Madame Scarron was forgotten by the courtiers of Madame de Maintenon, and every trait of virtue, of piety, or of goodness, which could be recollected or supposed, was called up to dignify the history of her early life.

We find that exactitude in fulfilling the formal observances of religion was always undoubtedly one of her qualities; and we find also, beyond doubt, that Scarron not only on various occasions expressed a high opinion of her virtue, but that he submitted his works to her inspection, and retrenched many passages gross in language or immoral in tendency at her suggestion. But at the same time we find that Madame Scarron was most intimate with the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos—a woman whose talents had been employed in the service of depravity—a prostitute by choice, and neither by circumstances nor necessity,—and whose opinions were formed for the purpose of justifying

the vices to which her temperament prompted her. Such was the bosom friend of Madame Scarron, and certainly, in her letters to that lady, there is not one word which does not tend to establish the belief that the conduct of Ninon de l'Enclos met with full approbation, if not with imitation, on the part of Madame Scarron.

There is more, however, than even this to be said in support of the doubts which have been entertained in regard to the extreme purity of Madame de Maintenon's life. We must remember, on the one hand, that all the evidences of her virtue which have come down to us, the instances cited of her modesty, the testimonies of Scarron to her innocence, and all the many speeches which he either himself uttered on that subject, or which were invented for him by others, have come down to us through persons who were either nearly connected with Madame de Maintenon herself, or whose interest it was to praise the secret wife of their monarch. On the other hand, however, we must not forget that the two letters which have been brought forward to prove that a culpable intimacy existed between herself and Fouquet have never been by any means proved to be hers. They are attributed to her by the author of the historical memoirs on the Bastille, but without the slightest proof; they bear no signature, they differ very much in style from her other letters, and, in short, are only the objects of vague suspicion. Besides

this, also, we must by no means forget that these letters are amongst those which Fouquet, in the most solemn manner, declared to be forgeries, calling God to witness the truth of his declaration at a time when his life was in hourly peril, and when the authenticity of the letters could in no lawful manner influence the sentence to be pronounced upon him.

Having cleared away, however, some very doubtful encomiums on the one hand, and some still more doubtful causes of suspicion on the other, there remains, unfortunately, but too much reason to believe that the conduct of Madame Scarron was not quite so regular as has been represented. There can be no doubt that the character of that lady was attacked, even during Scarron's life, both in public and in private. It is true that the assaults of malignity afford no proof of guilt whatsoever, but rather a presumptive proof of virtue, and that the prophecy of Hamlet to Ophelia, "Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny," is every day verified. But when we find, from accidental disclosures, circumstances of strong suspicion, when we find those who were bound to assert the innocence of a woman nearly connected with them, and for whom they entertained a strong affection, joining in the charge against her, we may reasonably doubt.

Now in the instance of Madame Scarron, her husband himself undoubtedly laid her open to the temptations of Fouquet. He received from the su-

perintendant a pension ; he sent his wife constantly to that minister's house ; through her mediation were all the transactions carried on which took place between Fouquet and Scarron ; her name was always put forward when a favour was to be asked, and her friends and relations were sure of obtaining place or distinction on application to the superintendant. In one of her letters she speaks of Fouquet as " that hero to whom we owe everything ;" and it is admitted, even by her great panegyrist Beaumelle, that Fouquet did not scruple at all events to tempt her virtue. The satirical Gilles Boileau did not scruple openly to attribute vice to Madame Scarron ; and Scarron himself, in his undoubted letters, shows no slight suspicions of the conduct of his wife, while, in some verses of scarcely less certain authenticity, he applies to himself the most gross and painful epithet which can be employed to designate a man whose wife has sacrificed her honour. If, to all this, we add the known fact that Madame Scarron was the bosom friend of almost all the most infamous women in Paris,—of Madame de Montchevreuil, Madame de Pommereuil, (one of the mistresses of the Coadjutor de Retz,) and of Ninon de l'Enclos, we may well entertain suspicions very unfavourable to the character of the person in question.

On the death of the satirical poet, Madame Scarron found herself in a situation of extreme difficulty. All that Scarron possessed had proceeded from the

efforts of his pen, or from the bounty of others. The pension which he enjoyed from the bounty of the queen-mother dropped immediately on his death, and that which he received from Fouquet also required to be renewed in favour of his widow. For the latter she applied immediately, and we are told by her biographers and friends that Fouquet attempted, in complying with her request, to overcome her virtue, and was repulsed with dignity. But the scandal which took place between her and the Superintendant dates from a much earlier period, and other suspicions, especially in regard to Louis de Mornay, Marquis of Villarceaux, point to the period of the death of Scarron. It is true that Madame de Villarceaux remained constantly her friend; but that lady was absent from Paris, as Madame de Maintenon's own letters show, at the time to which these suspicions are attributed, while Monsieur de Villarceaux himself was in the capital, and by her own account she sought for him especially, in the crowd which attended the King and Queen's entrance into Paris in 1660.

Whatever temptation, however, that most miserable of all situations, noble birth surrounded by penury, might throw in the way of Madame de Maintenon, and whether or not she might have yielded on certain occasions to those temptations, she felt the strong necessity of maintaining a high reputation, and always put forth piety and external devotion to counterbalance the imputations

which were very likely to fall upon her from the libertine society which she frequented. She evidently had not ventured to apply personally to the queen-mother for the continuation of Scarron's pension after his death. But having retired as a boarder to the Ursuline convent in the Rue St. Jacques, where she had received a part of her early education, she was surprised by the pension being suddenly renewed, and five hundred francs a year added thereunto, at the solicitation, it would seem, of the Marechale d'Albret. She afterwards retired to the Hospitalers of the Place Royale, where she managed her affairs with the utmost economy, keeping up a respectable appearance, and yet having constantly a considerable sum to bestow upon the poor. Her conduct here seems to have been irreproachable, and many of the better part of her acquaintances now became her friends. Amongst the rest was the Marechale d'Albret, who sincerely and deeply befriended her, and at whose house she met the most distinguished people of Paris.

Although Madame de Maintenon was still extremely poor, she had sufficient for all her necessities, and seems to have desired no more, saying of herself, "I was raised a hundred points above interest. I sought for honour." A high reputation, and the approbation of the world in general, formed through all the earlier part of her life one of the chief motives of Madame de Maintenon's conduct; and it would seem, that it was her just appreciation

of the means by which a high and permanent reputation was to be obtained, which led her rather to separate herself, at least in appearance, from the irreligious and unscrupulous society into which she had been thrown, than to yield to the current. Extremely pleasing in her manners, gentle, graceful, beautiful, and apparently attaching herself to those who loved her with strong feelings of gratitude and affection, she won the regard of many persons; and, by never using the wit that she possessed to wound or injure any one, she avoided making enemies so long as her poverty and inferiority of station left her free from envy. Under these circumstances, the many persons who were interested in her fate, as the only way of raising a person from poverty by respectable means, who had gained so much upon their esteem, endeavoured to find a suitable alliance for her with some person of greater wealth. Such a person was at length found, a man of a libertine character, and probably older than herself, but of high rank and great fortune. Madame Scarron, however, in this instance, took a high and noble resolution; and she refused to unite herself to one whom she could neither love nor respect.

We know not who this person was; but in her own letters Madame Scarron describes him as everything that was hateful, and makes a comparison between him and Scarron, greatly to the advantage of the latter. "What think you," she says, "of the comparison which they dare to make between this

man and Monsieur Scarron? Oh God, what a difference! Without fortune, without inducements, he drew to my abode good company, while this one would have hated and driven it away. Monsieur Scarron had that cheerfulness which all the world knows, and that kindness of mind which scarcely any one knew him to possess. This person has a mind neither brilliant, nor playful, nor solid; if he speaks, he is ridiculous. My husband was excellent at heart, and I had corrected his licence. He was neither outrageous nor fundamentally vicious; of undoubted probity, and disinterestedness without example. C—— loves nothing but his pleasures, and is esteemed by none but our abandoned youth; devoted to women, the dupe of his friends, haughty, passionate, avaricious, and prodigal. At least he seems to me all this.”

Scarcely had she refused this man—and thereby given offence to a multitude of those who, according to the custom of the world in general, sought to make her happy in their own way, though that way was the sure one to make her miserable, and who now left her in wretchedness of one kind, because she would not embrace the wretchedness they had laid out for her,—when the death of the queen-dowager suddenly deprived her of her pension, and left her once more in the most abject poverty.

A whirlwind of blame and reproach for having refused the alliance proposed to her, now assailed her on all sides; and some passages of Madame de

Maintenon's letters upon that subject are so much to her honour, that it would be doing injustice to a person, whose faults we may have to dwell upon at large, were we to omit inserting them. Nor, indeed, should we be able to arrive at a just appreciation of her remarkable character, did we not take into consideration these indications of fine and noble feeling, ere we proceed to show how ambition trampled over all such sentiments, and taught her to employ those opinions and feelings, which she long entertained with sincerity and truth, as arts to supplant others, and to arrive at a station scarcely compatible with their real existence.

By this time Madame de Maintenon had once more retired to the Ursulines of the Rue St. Jacques, and notwithstanding her having refused the person who had been proposed to her as a husband, the Duchess of Richelieu, whose previous history we have noticed in another place, sent to offer her a retreat in her own house upon the death of the queen-mother. In answer to a letter to that effect, Madame de Maintenon writes, "I thank you, Madame, with all my heart, for the retreat which you offer me: but I am very far at present from thinking of quitting the Rue St. Jacques. Nothing but a life of retirement is compatible with the situation to which the death of the queen has reduced me. I shall have the honour, Madame, of bringing you myself the veil such as you have ordered. My mourning is very different from that of the court; I have to

weep my benefactress, and my repose, and my happiness."

Again, to the same lady Madame de Maintenon replies a few days after, when the subject of the marriage had been once more brought forward, "Madam, I swear in the presence of God, that even if I had foreseen the death of the queen, I would not have accepted that offer. I should have better loved my liberty, I should have respected my own indigence. My friends are very cruel, Madam. They blame me for having rejected the proposal of a man, rich and of good birth, it is true, but without mind and without morality. I have said to Madame la Maréchale everything that I could think of, the most strong and the most sensible; still she condemns me, and imputes to me my own misfortunes. In truth I should not have now to regret the loss of the pension which gave me subsistence; but God will provide in that respect, and I should at present have had to regret my solitude, my liberty, and my repose, blessings which God could not have given me back without a miracle. If the refusal were again to be given, I would give it still, notwithstanding the profound misery with which it has pleased Heaven to try me. I have fully consulted with myself, I have considered everything, weighed everything, seen everything. I am not then culpable, Madame; I am but unfortunate, and that is fully enough."

Such were the letters which Madame Scarron

wrote to some of her friends, upon an occasion in which her character appears to the highest advantage. Notwithstanding; however, the constancy with which she prepared to suffer misfortune, she was not without making efforts to obtain the renewal of her pension from the King. She applied to all her friends to use their interest in her favour; she solicited ministers and statesmen, she presented petitions to the King, but in vain; and she now found, in a moment of want and necessity, what every one will feel when under the pressure of misfortune, — the hollowness of the world's friendships, the base and cowardly selfishness of those who will not risk their own favour, or hazard the charge of importunity for the salvation of those whom they have often offered to serve, when service was not needed, and the Gorgon aspect of that poverty which so readily turns the hearts of friends into stone.

In Madame Scarron's letters about that period, she details all that occurred with that bitterness of spirit which might be expected; mentions the persons to whom she had applied, and points out the result, the friendship of the lips, protestations of interest where no interest existed, promises of service in the tone which predicts they will be broken, and offers as empty as the air in which they were breathed. "Oh!" she exclaims, "if I were in favour, how differently would I treat the unfortunate!"

Madame Scarron at length gave up all hopes of obtaining a renewal of the pension she had received from the queen-mother, but some one offered to obtain for her a small post in the household of Mademoiselle d'Aumale,* who was at that time about to set off to espouse the young King of Portugal. She made her mind up to accept the proposal, took the brightest view of affairs, and seems to have been comparatively happy; but just at the moment that the princess and her suite were about to depart, either accident, or a last hope, induced her to seek an interview with Madame de Montespan. She first endeavoured to obtain one through Mademoiselle d'Artigni, expressing merely a desire to see once more a person whom she had formerly known at the Hotel d'Albret, and whom she calls "the Marvel of France."

Madame Scarron was, however, ultimately presented to Madame de Montespan by that lady's own sister, Madame de Thiange, and the conversation immediately turned upon her proposed journey to Lisbon, and the circumstances which induced her to go into this voluntary state of exile. Madame de Montespan heard her with feeling and kindness, made her write in haste a new petition, and undertook to present it to the King.

The result was such as Madame de Montespan

* She was younger sister of Mademoiselle de Nemours, who married the Duke of Savoy. The history of both sisters we have noticed in another place.

probably expected. The King had been wearied by the name of Madame Scarron, so frequent had been the petitions presented in her name; and when the memorial was put into his hands by Madame de Montespan, he exclaimed, "What! the widow Scarron again!"

"Sire," replied Madame de Montespan with generous frankness, "you should long ago have ceased to hear her talked of. It is astonishing that your majesty has not yet listened to a woman, whose ancestors ruined themselves in the service of yours."

To the representations of Madame de Montespan were added those of Villeroi, in whose probity Louis had great confidence, and the pension was accordingly granted at their solicitation. She thus owed her stay in France, and the means of actual existence, to the influence of Madame de Montespan, exerted in the most generous and high-spirited manner; and, if the feelings which she affected to entertain, and the opinions which she afterwards took care to instil into the bosom of the King regarding his connexion with that lady, were just or real, she either committed a gross meanness in soliciting her aid at first, or an infamous piece of treachery in labouring to supplant her afterwards. Her conduct has been defended in this respect, on the plea that, if at that time any adulterous intercourse really existed between the King and Madame de Montespan, it was a profound

secret. But nobody could ever read the letter of Madame Scarron, dated the 11th of July 1666, in which she gives an account of the whole transaction, without feeling perfectly sure that the widow of the buffoon was at that moment fully aware that the "Marvel of France" was the mistress of the King,* and indeed she herself remarks, "The King, they tell me, received the petition kindly; perhaps the hand which offered it may have rendered it agreeable."

The renewal of her pension was followed by a strange contrast between the first outbreak of her joy, in suppers with Ninon de l'Enclos, where the lute, the marquis, the Maréchal d'Albret, &c. &c. figured in rather an extraordinary manner, and a sudden plunge into devotion which she took towards

* If the dates of Madame de Maintenon's letters are at all correct—and with regard to the two we are about to speak of, the incidents of the renewal of her pension, and other circumstances mentioned, leave not a doubt as to the fact—the adulterous intercourse between Madame de Montespan and the King must have taken place when the widow Scarron solicited her aid, which was in July 1666; for in March 1669 she speaks of more than one child which Madame de Montespan had then had by the King. It is only by such indications that we can arrive at a just appreciation of her conduct. Historians generally supposed that the first child of Louis by Madame de Montespan was born in 1669; but there can be no doubt whatever that early in that year Madame Scarron undertook the charge of his *children* by that lady, and she speaks of them herself distinctly in the plural number, and as already born. We are unwilling to enter into such subjects at large, but the letters of Madame Scarron leave not a shadow of doubt of the facts.

the end of the same year, in consequence of the sermons of Bourdaloue. Amongst other mortifications which her confessor inflicted on her at this time was, that of rendering herself tiresome in company; on which she observes pleasantly enough, "I find myself yawning, and I make others yawn, and I am sometimes tempted to give up devotion."

From this period Madame Scarron lived in greater retirement than she had previously done, without, however, giving up the society in which she had previously moved; and from some of her friends, immediately connected with Madame de Montespan, she received, in March 1669, pressing solicitations to take charge of some children, said to be of the highest distinction, but whose existence and education were equally to be kept a most profound secret.

Madame Scarron at once divined who were the parents of these children; but she now made some difficulties, though the prospects held out to her were very advantageous. As we shall have to comment on her conduct we will give her reply to the proposal in her own words. "Nevertheless," she says, in her answer to Madame de Heudicourt, "if the children are the King's, I will do it willingly; I could not charge myself without scruple with those of Madame de Montespan. Thus the King must order me to do it. Such is my last word upon the subject."

The whole of Madame Scarron's letter, but

especially the part here cited,—joined with the words which she afterwards uses, “Three years ago I should not have had this delicacy; but since I have learned many things which prescribe it to me as a duty,”—points evidently to the conclusion that her scruples were of a religious nature; and consequently, whatever might be the impression produced at the time upon those she addressed, history can but look upon those scruples as a part of the same hypocrisy which characterized all her after conduct in regard to Madame de Montespan.

“If the children are the King’s,” Madame Scarron says, “I am very willing.” Now had it been in reality a religious scruple which affected her mind, she would have made no distinction between the natural children of the King and of any other person. They were still natural children; they were still the offspring of a double adultery, and in the eye of morality or religion, or even of common sense, it could make not the slightest difference whether they were the King’s or not, except indeed by aggravating the crime to which they owed their birth. But when we come to consider the worldly advantages which she gained by arriving at the positive certainty that the children were those of the monarch, and by inducing him personally to command her to take charge of them, we shall find that in this instance, as in almost all others, she only used the veil of delicacy and piety to cover over the keenest appreciation of her own interests. By obtaining the

command of Louis to take charge of the children, she brought herself in immediate connexion with the King; by refusing to do it, unless commanded by him, she enhanced the apparent value of her services, and, in fact, laid him under an obligation; and by the whole proceeding she avoided subjecting herself in any degree to Madame de Montespan, while she at once took a high place in the service of the King.

There can be no doubt that Louis himself had nothing to do with the choice which had been made of Madame Scarron. Madame de Montespan knew and appreciated the high mental qualifications of the widow of the burlesque poet, and she had made a wise choice in selecting a governess for her children, though, as it proved, an unwise choice as far as she herself was concerned. It was to her then, and to her sister, Madame de Thiange, that Madame Scarron owed her appointment, and not at all to the King. But Louis was very easily persuaded to add his commands to their request, and Madame Scarron was soon established in an anomalous office, half way between that of governess and that of foster-mother to his natural children by Madame de Montespan. It is true that the pious lady who thus made herself a convenience, and without actually serving the King in his illicit pleasures, abetted them by facilitating their concealment, risked her own reputation by her complacency. The greatest secrecy was maintained in

regard to the children ; and every effort was made to hide their existence from the public, till such time as Madame de Montespan, if not hardened in vice, at least lost to all sense of modesty by habit, came forth and daringly avowed her adultery with Louis.

A house was taken for Madame Scarron at Vaugirard ; horses and servants were hired for her, and she publicly undertook the education of Mademoiselle de Heudicourt, in order, by some ostensible employment, to cover the more secret occupation to which she really devoted herself.

Nevertheless, the mystery which attended her proceedings could not very long escape notice. The nurses themselves, who had charge of the children, were not aware of the rank of the offspring they were intrusted with. Madame Scarron visited them frequently by night on foot, and disguised, carrying under her cloak, food, linen, and various necessaries. She often passed whole nights with the children when they were sick ; and yet during the day she frequented the society with which she had been accustomed to associate, for the purpose of preventing any one from knowing that she was burdened with a secret of importance. That she was so burdened, however, was soon surmised ; and it is more than probable that the whole particulars were divined by the Parisian world long before the connexion between the King and Madame de Montespan was acknowledged.

Gradually, as we have shown before, the sense of decency and the shame of unconfirmed vice wore off with the King and his mistress; the children were even occasionally taken to St. Germain's, and brought into a room where the King and Madame de Montespan were, by the nurse, while Madame Scarron remained without. The King asked the nurse, who was ignorant of his connexion with the children, several questions, one of which was, who she thought was their father. "I do not know at all," replied the nurse, "but I imagine that he is some duke or president of the parliament;" at which reply Madame de Montespan was extremely pleased, and the King laughed till he cried.

The King's merriment might very probably divulge, to the nurse at least, a secret which was rapidly becoming none. Close upon the letter in which Madame Scarron relates this anecdote, comes an epistle to her from the Chevalier de Meré, her early friend, who no longer treats her as the young Indian, but shows in his every word that deference and respect which courtiers feel for those who are rising in the world. Her additional importance evidently had charms for Madame Scarron; and all her letters at this time prove, notwithstanding everything that has been said both by herself and La Beaumelle, that she suffered neither the King nor Madame de Montespan to perceive the slightest degree of disapprobation of their connexion. On the contrary, as the natural

children of the monarch grew up, she became the friend and frequent companion of Madame de Montespan, who showed an extreme partiality for her society, and lost no opportunity of praising her to the King.

Louis, however, had heard much of Madame de Maintenon's talents and learning. He knew that she formed one of the circle of the *Hotels de Richelieu* and *D'Albret*, where the affected literati of the day used to swarm in great numbers, and the monarch was somewhat afraid of, and somewhat prejudiced against, a woman whom he classed with those who were her associates. These impressions, and the praises of Madame de Montespan, caused Louis, in speaking to that lady of Madame Scarron, always to call her "*Votre bel-esprit*;" and on some occasions he seems to have shown his dislike towards her so strongly, that she dared not present herself before him for several days. She was in the way, however, of winning his esteem, and a very few opportunities of hearing her conversation soon showed him therein a charm, which captivated him even after that of Madame de Montespan.

Madame Scarron now passed the greater part of her evenings in the society of Louis and his mistress, and undoubtedly afforded to their amours all the countenance of her piety and propriety. The King had before this time raised her pension from two thousand livres to two thousand crowns, and he

shortly after made her a present of a hundred thousand francs, in consequence of a clever reply made to him by the Duke of Maine. It was to that prince that Madame Scarron was now chiefly attached, and his precocious mind and amiable disposition, as a child, seem to have gained Madame Scarron's affection in the highest degree.

In 1673, the decent veil which the King had cast over his intrigues with Madame de Montespan was so far drawn aside, that by an act registered by the parliament, he declared the Duke of Maine to be legitimate, without, however, mentioning the name of his mother; and in order to correct the lameness with which the boy was afflicted, Madame de Maintenon took him to Antwerp early in 1674, for the purpose of consulting a famous physician of that town. The journey was kept perfectly secret, as well as the condition of the children who accompanied her; and though the trouble that she took, and the skill of the physician proved ineffectual, she received from the King substantial marks of gratitude, which enabled her in the end of that year to buy the estate of Maintenon. Various other favours were showered upon her in the same year, and at the request of Madame de Montespan herself she was admitted to all the private parties of the King.

About that period also it is clear that Madame de Montespan endeavoured to establish her fortune upon a firm basis, by marrying her to a man of the

highest rank at the court.* Madame de Maintenon suspected that the motive of the King's mistress was to separate her from the royal children; and she rejected the proposal, assigning her extreme tenderness for her young charge as her motive, and speaking of her affection for them in such terms as to induce Madame de Montespan, who had some cause for discontent, to embrace her warmly, and exact a promise that she would never quit her.

From all the correspondence of that period I have no doubt whatever that Madame de Montespan began to see with uneasy sensations the fondness of the King for the society of Madame Scarron. Probably those feelings did not amount to anything like jealousy; but I believe them to have had a share in all those squabbles and disagreements, which now daily succeeded between the King's mistress and her friend. In the course

* This is proved, in the first place, by a letter from the Chevalier de Meré without date, in which he plainly refers to some gentleman whom he found paying attentions to Madame Scarron, and who, he says, appeared to him clever enough to hope to obtain the government of France under the greatest prince in the world, and good enough to aspire to conduct so beautiful a lady as herself. In the second place, in a letter to Madame de Coulanges, Madame de Maintenon herself says, in speaking of an invitation, "I should never be to myself if I did not always refuse. My servitude will finish; but, alas! perhaps it will finish by another servitude;" and in another letter to Madame de Heudicourt, she speaks of the marriage distinctly, leaves no doubt that it had been proposed by Madame de Montespan, and points out that the person alluded to held the rank of duke.

of the year 1675, Madame Scarron went with the Duke of Maine to the waters of Barege. Along the whole road they were received with the utmost distinction and splendour; and the letters of Madame Scarron (or, as she was now called, Madame de Maintenon*) to Madame de Montespan, show still throughout the same tacit countenance to that lady's connexion with the King as heretofore.

The very first letter in which Madame de Maintenon makes the slightest allusion to any religious scruple upon the subject, leaves it very difficult to say whether she was most inclined to give encouragement or discouragement to this double adultery. She says, in writing to Madame de Montespan, on the 13th of March 1678, "If ever passion was pardonable, it is this one without doubt; but I will always say that it is not pardonable with God, nor even with men." Such was the mitigating manner in which Madame de Maintenon, even at so late a period, spoke of a crime of such great magnitude.

It appears, however, quite clear, that when and

* The story runs, and it is vouched for by a letter from Madame de Maintenon to Madame de Coulanges, that the territory of Maintenon was erected into a Marquise in 1688, that a few days after the King called her Madame de Maintenon, instead of Madame Scarron, and that she thenceforth took the former title, though not before. It is proved, however, that this is false, and that the name of Madame de Maintenon was given to her long before by a letter sent by the Duke of Maine to his mother from Barege, in June 1675, in which he twice calls the lady in question Madame de Maintenon.

where it suited her purpose Madame de Maintenon could use a very different tone; but long before she even addressed so weak a remonstrance to Madame de Montespan, she had bitterly quarrelled with that lady, and was step by step pursuing the course on which she proceeded without relaxation, till she deprived her of the regard and confidence of the King, and stepped into the vacant place herself.

Whether or not Madame de Maintenon pursued this course systematically, and at what time her purpose of supplanting Madame de Montespan assumed a distinct and tangible form, He only who can look into the human heart, could reveal. But it is certain that very shortly after Madame de Maintenon had been introduced into the private circle of the King, and after Louis had discovered the charm of her conversation, constant quarrels took place between her and Madame de Montespan, and that the former gradually withdrew even from the mother of the royal children herself all control over their conduct and education. Naturally haughty and imperious, Madame de Montespan could ill endure such conduct in a woman whom she herself had raised from the depth of misery, and altercations of the most violent character took place between them; in the course of which the dignity of the King himself was frequently more than endangered.

On the one hand, Madame de Maintenon having gained the strong position of obtaining the King's commands to undertake the charge of his natural

children, refused to yield to any orders but his; while on the other, Madame de Montespan moved Louis by his affections, and on one occasion, representing the insolence with which she was treated by the governess of her children, induced him to say, "If she displeases you, why do you not discharge her?"

Although Madame de Montespan herself had both too much regard for Madame de Maintenon, notwithstanding all their quarrels, and too much admiration for the manner in which she brought up her children, to follow the King's advice, she could not refrain from letting her rival know that the King had placed such power in her hands; and, indignant at such a speech as that we have reported from the lips of Louis, Madame de Maintenon declared her intention of retiring from the court. Her purpose was expressed in terms so decided that both the King and his mistress believing she would execute it, regretted having driven her to it, and in order to induce her to remain, determined that the King should himself ask her to abandon her intention, and notify to her that in future she should only be accountable to him for the education of the princes. Vehement quarrels still went on, however, and we see Madame de Maintenon vacillating between the desire of quitting a court where she was subject to constant discomforts, anxieties, carès and fatigues, and the ambitious clinging to a painful

office, which afforded her, however, a hope of raising herself to higher things. Thus we find her writing in 1674, to her confessor the Abbé Gobelin, that she is firmly determined to quit the court at the end of the year, and yet shortly after she tells the Abbé Testu, "My estrangement from the court is so little decided that I am bound to it by ties more strong than ever. I have no subject of discontent, and people have without doubt given you wrong information on purpose."

In fact the letters of Madame de Maintenon herself to her different friends are so contradictory and unsatisfactory, as to establish, without any other proof, the deceitfulness and hypocrisy of her character, but it is from other sources that we must derive a correct view of those events which were taking place at the court, and which changed the whole fortunes of Madame de Maintenon and of Madame de Montespan.

We shall now proceed with the history of Madame de Montespan and Madame de Maintenon together; as the struggle between those ladies forms a part, and no inconsiderable part either, of the history of Louis XIV. That struggle was long and severe; for habit, if not affection, wit, beauty and even youth were in favour of Madame de Montespan, in the contest for possession of the King. But, on the other hand, Madame de Maintenon had, if not directly in her own favour, yet acting in opposition to her rival, satiety on the part of the

monarch, the remorse of Louis at the state of life into which he had plunged, and the remorse even of Madame de Montespan herself, which proved the most adverse circumstance in her renewed efforts to retain possession of the King's affection. The first fit of this remorse took place in the year 1675, and is attributed by different writers to different causes. It is generally supposed that the preaching of Bossuet and others during the holy week awakened in the mind of the King and his mistress a feeling of deep repentance, which induced them to separate for a time by mutual consent.

The Marquis de la Fare recounts the matter differently, and not without the semblance of truth, "The King," he says "met the sacrament one day, as it was being carried in procession to one of his officers who was at the point of death, and, for the purpose of setting a good example, turned round and followed the Host to the chamber of the dying man. The spectacle of the chamber of death so struck and affected him as to awaken thoughts long excluded from his bosom; and on his return to Madame de Montespan, he communicated to her the remorse he felt in regard to the criminality of their connexion. He found her in the same state of mind as himself, and the separation accordingly took place."

Madame de Montespan proceeded to Paris, and the King remained at Versailles. But this separation lasted not long. The first effects of terror and

repentance soon wore off; and notwithstanding the exhortations of the Bishop of Meaux, and the interested dissuasions of Madame de Maintenon, the fair sharer in the King's crimes was recalled to Versailles. It is said even that the bishop himself in his journeys from the palace to the capital carried with him letters to Madame de Montespan from the King, which breathed anything but the spirit of purity and religion.

In the following year, 1676, Madame de Montespan proceeded to the watering-place of Bourbon, and Madame de Maintenon remained with the Duke of Maine in possession of the ground; nor, if we are to judge from the letters of Madame de Sevigné, did she use her opportunity ineffectually. In a letter of the 6th of May 1676, Madame de Sevigné speaks of Madame de Maintenon as more triumphant than ever; and makes use of the remarkable words, "Everything is subject to her empire." She paints her also in the same letter as bearing her success with haughtiness. But on the return of the favourite from the waters of Bourbon, with beauty renewed, and graces ever various, she at once seems to have recovered her empire over the mind of the King. Madame de Maintenon, however, had by this time established an empire founded upon a different basis. She had skilfully, artfully, and, few can doubt that we might add, hypocritically, persuaded the monarch that in all her proceedings she sought nothing but his good.

It was easy to point out to him the evil of the course he was pursuing, it was easy to cry up the beauties of moral and religious virtue to a man who was by no means insensible thereof, but in whose dominions there had been found nothing powerful enough to restrain him, not even his own conscience. It was easy to convince him that she was right; and, as long as her art was sufficient to conceal her art, to make him respect her for promulgating opinions which he could not but respect. .

The hold of Madame de Montespan was upon Louis's affection; the hold which Madame de Maintenon established was upon his esteem. She was skilful enough, she was wise enough to direct her whole efforts to make the King believe that she was animated by the strongest zeal for his temporal and eternal welfare; and very little was required on the King's own part to make her efforts for that purpose effectual. That little was easily to be found in his own character. He was by nature vain, and by nature susceptible of religious impressions: his vanity taught him to believe that hers was disinterested kindness, and his piety showed him that her arguments were consonant with his own deepest convictions. Thus, during the five years that followed, as his passion for Madame de Montespan decreased; as the remorse with which his mind was filled, and in which she participated, rendered their intercourse painful,

and interrupted it by frequent separations; as her vehement quarrels with Madame de Maintenon annoyed the King, who was often forced to be the arbitrator, and as her jealousy in regard to his passing amours with other people, irritated a monarch unwilling to submit to any restraint, the ties which attached him to Madame de Montespan were daily worn down to a thread that an infant's hand might have broken, while the bonds of respect and esteem which Madame de Maintenon had cast around him were every day strengthened. Nor was the latter unsuccessful in rendering those bonds light and agreeable: her conversation was full of grace and sweetness, her judgment was accurate and fine, her temper was easy and placable, and, although forty years had passed over her head, her beauty had been treated leniently by time, and her countenance was always pleasing and full of calm and thoughtful meekness. Thus, when irritated by the caprices or jealousy of his imperious mistress, Louis was sure to find in the society of Madame de Maintenon both solace and amusement.

Day by day the preference grew more marked, and of course, in consequence, the impatience and irritation of Madame de Montespan increased towards her rival, while scenes of altercation of the most distressing kind daily took place. Frequently Madame de Montespan complained to the King; but Louis, though in his conversations with her rival he continued long to excuse or justify his

mistress, would not consent that Madame de Maintenon should retire. The piety of Madame de Montespan affected her only by fits : but that of Madame de Maintenon was both more continuous and more apparent ; and about the time that the conversion of Protestants, and their persecution was becoming a mode at the court of Louis XIV. she lost no opportunity of signaling herself in a manner so agreeable to the King. All her Protestant relations, all her friends who had been educated in that faith to which she herself had long steadfastly adhered, were urged by her with every persuasion to turn to the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church ; and in many instances she was successful, gaining thereby great credit with all the pious persons of the court.

Notwithstanding the great art of Madame de Maintenon, she occasionally took some measures in her eagerness to break off the connexion between the King and Madame de Montespan, which, had they reached the monarch's ears, could not have failed greatly to offend or disgust him. In a letter even as far back as 1676, addressed to Madame St. Geran, she suggests to the King's confessor to refuse him the sacrament unless he broke off his intercourse with his mistress. In 1678 and 1679, also, her conduct towards the King became so apparent that Madame de Montespan herself, on more than one occasion, boldly accused her of seeking to carry off from her the heart of the King.

In the following year the monarch's coldness had become so apparent towards his mistress, that she complained of it with bitter tears, reproached herself for not having accompanied him to Flanders in 1679, and cast vague and wild accusations against every one who approached the person of the King. Amongst the rest Madame de Maintenon again suffered from her fury, though that lady was but too conscious that in this case it was in no degree affection for herself which caused the additional estrangement between Louis and Madame de Montespan. That additional estrangement took place in consequence of a new intrigue which we may soon have to mention; but at the present moment we must speak of the measures which Madame de Montespan now adopted, upon a systematic plan, in order to remove from the court, or ruin in the opinion of the King, a person whom she justly considered as the most dangerous of her rivals.

With Louvois, with La Rochefoucault, and with several others, she laid schemes for the purpose either of marrying Madame de Maintenon to the old Duke of Villars,* or of reviving all the scandals which were current against her nearly twenty years before. Those scandals, as we have

* I am inclined to believe that the proposal of marrying her to the Duke of Villars was distinct from another arrangement of the same kind referred to before. Indeed it is almost demonstrable that the two transactions were entirely separated.

shown, were many, and not without some apparent foundation. Her prompt refusal of the Duke of Villars now brought them all forth against her, and there can be little doubt that everything was said by Madame de Montespan and by her friends which could tend to sink the governess of her children in the opinion of the King.

Perhaps, however, somewhat too much was said; and there can be little doubt that those letters which had been produced upon the trial of Fouquet, and some of which had been attributed to Madame de Maintenon, were now again brought up to prejudice the King against her. If so, however, it is by no means improbable that Louis was himself convinced that the letters were forged, or that Madame de Maintenon was enabled easily to prove to him that they were not in her hand-writing, and that, as any one must see who examines them for a moment, they displayed in no degree her style of thought or of expression. In all her letters at that time, however, Madame de Maintenon refers to the rumours that were circulated regarding her, attributes horrid charges against her to Madame de Montespan, and endeavours to show that both La Rochefoucault and his son were caballing to injure her. She triumphed over all, however; and the King, as the strongest mark of his unshaken confidence, appointed her in the year 1680, second lady in waiting to the Dauphiness on the marriage of that princess with his son. She was now free from all

dominion on the part of Madame de Montespan, but the jealousy of that lady continued and increased; and, as we find that from time to time the King spent one or two hours with her alone in her cabinet, and proved himself "the most agreeable man in his kingdom," it is not at all astonishing that the King's mistress should look upon her with apprehension.

At the time, however, when Madame de Maintenon received a station in the household of the Dauphiness, and when Louis gave her so strong a proof that he disbelieved all accusations against her, he was himself entirely occupied with a new passion which had seized him for a beautiful girl of the court named Mademoiselle de Fontange. Beauty and grace, however, were her only attractions; for she had neither the deep devoted tenderness of La Vallière, nor the wit and majesty of Montespan. She was contented to be the mistress of the King, a station which, however degrading, had acquired a false appearance of distinction from the pompous brilliancy with which Louis had enveloped his vices; but she exacted from the monarch, that the same rank should be given to her which had been given to La Vallière, and being created a Duchess, she remained for a short period one of the avowed mistresses of the King. Her reign, however, lasted little more than a year: in the year 1681, as we shall notice more particularly hereafter, death delivered Madame de Montespan of the new rival

who had risen up against her, having before taken the child which she had borne to the King.

In the commencement of this intrigue it was some time before Madame de Montespan became aware of the King's attachment to this unhappy girl; but when it became public, her fury knew no bounds, and on one occasion, when Madame de Maintenon was present, her passionate reproaches to Louis went so far as to induce him to say, after bearing patiently great provocation, "I have already told you, madam, that I will not be troubled." This was followed by an estrangement of some duration between the King and his mistress; but at length they were reunited; and one or two extracts from the letters of Madame de Maintenon will give a better view than anything else can do of the state of mind in which Madame de Montespan passed the last few years of her connexion with the King.

"The bounties of the King," says Madame de Maintenon, in June 1679, "do not compensate to me for the loss of my tranquillity. Madame de Montespan will have it that I seek to be his mistress; 'But,' said I to her, 'he has then three?' 'Yes,' replied she, 'one in name; that girl in fact, (Mademoiselle de Fontange) and you at heart.' I represented to her with all gentleness, that she listened too much to her resentment. She replied, that she knew my artifices, and was only unfortunate in not having listened to her resentments.

She reproaches me with her bounties, with her presents, with those of the King, and tells me that she had fed me, and that I strangled her. You know the truth of all this. It is a strange thing that we can neither live together nor separate. I love her, and I cannot persuade myself that she hates me."

On the 22nd of August following she writes, "Jealousies have ceased; peace is concluded. It was full time that the King, after having given it to Europe, should give it to his court. Madame de Montespan is more brilliant and more adored than ever. She flatters me, she confides to me all her designs, consults me, and listens to me."*

A change, however, had come over the court before the 28th of October, when Madame de Maintenon again writes, "The Prince is the idol of the King; the more his tenderness for the son augments, the more it seems that his love for the mother diminishes. It is no more now than a first inclination."

Shortly after, a breach, which seemed almost irreparable, again took place between the King and Madame de Montespan; but by this time, her rival was installed in the household of the Dauphiness, and expressed a hope that the King's mistress would cease to persecute her.

* This is the language of the pious lady who wished the King's confessor to refuse him the sacrament, if he did not separate from Madame de Montespan.

It is evident, however, from all her letters, that Madame de Maintenon herself had not ceased in any degree to interfere between the King and his concubinè. On the contrary, it is clear that she, at this very time, engaged the wife of the monarch's son to labour with her for the purpose of rendering the separation between Louis and Madame de Montespan permanent. Every means was taken to impress the monarch with the criminality of his former conduct, and the Dauphiness, with sincerity, truth, and disinterestedness, laboured to bring the mind of the King to the same conclusions which Madame de Maintenon urged upon him with no less zeal, but with purposes, perhaps, not quite so pure.

There were others, however, who laboured to defeat the exertions of both Madame de Maintenon and the princess; and at the head of these was the celebrated minister Louvois, the attached friend of Madame de Montespan, to whose character and tone his own bore a great resemblance.

“M. de Louvois,” writes Madame de Maintenon, in the beginning of 1680, “has contrived for Madame de Montespan a *tête-à-tête* with the King. He has been suspected for some time of this design; his movements were studied, precautions were taken against opportunities, and means were used to break through his measures; but they were so well taken, that at length the King has fallen into the trap. At this very moment they are in the midst of explanations, and love alone will hold

counsel to-day. The King is firm, but Madame de Montespan is very charming in her tears."

Immediately afterwards she writes to the same person, " This explanation has confirmed the King. I have congratulated him on having overcome so redoubtable an enemy. He avows that M. de Louvois is a more dangerous man than the Prince of Orange, but that he is necessary. Madame de Montespan at first wept, then burst into reproaches, and at length spoke haughtily. She broke forth against me, according to her custom ; nevertheless she has promised to live on good terms with me."

Scarcely, however, was this letter written, showing that Madame de Maintenon believed all her schemes to be successful, than it was followed by another, in which her grief and disappointment at finding herself deceived, broke forth in the following curious terms. " I am devoured by chagrin. I had flattered myself that Madame de Montespan would cease to persecute me, and that I should be able to labour in peace for my salvation with a princess who gives all the court an example greatly admired, but very little followed. She (Madame de Montespan) is reconciled with the King. Louvois brought it about. She has forgotten nothing that could injure me ; she painted a picture of me the most horrible that it is possible to conceive. My God, thy will be done ! She came yesterday to my house, and overwhelmed me with reproaches and abuse. The King surprised us in the middle of a

conversation, which ended better than it had begun. He ordered us to embrace and to love each other; but you know that the last article cannot be commanded. He added laughing, that he found it more easy to restore peace to all Europe than between two women, and that we took fire upon trifles."

The rest of the correspondence between Madame de Maintenon and Madame de Frontenac would be invaluable to the history of those times, if the dates were attached, and the letters were perfect. Such, however, is not the case, and I shall therefore only cite a few words of one letter more, the date of which is ascertained to be the 10th of October 1680, which I mention more for the purpose of showing that up to that period the King's growing regard for Madame de Maintenon had not assumed the character of love, than to display the course of conduct by which she supplanted Madame de Montespan.

"I receive," she said, "every day new favours from the King; but my health, which is becoming weaker every day, will not permit me to enjoy them long. All that I gain in credit I lose in tranquillity. This life is unsupportable to me. The King doubts me and fears me. He overwhelms me with bounties in order to shut my mouth. He loves the truth and will not listen to it."

The growing favour of Madame de Maintenon

called upon her not only the anger and indignation of Madame de Montespan, but the envy of the whole court; and again in 1680 all the scandals which had been circulated against Madame Scarron were revived to blast the reputation of Madame de Maintenon. Her brother, for whom she had obtained several favours from the King, was inclined to pursue the propagators of such rumours with violence; but Madame de Maintenon herself besought him to moderate his anger in such terms as to leave no doubt that she felt perfectly well aware that the imputations cast upon her would not be believed in the quarter where it was most important to her that they should be discredited. On the contrary, we find that every day her favour increased; and, with the household of the Dauphiness, she accompanied the whole court into Flanders and Lorraine in the years 1680 and 1681.

In the latter year the death of Madame de Fontange delivered Madame de Montespan, as we have said, from a rival whose youth and beauty affected her more than the talent and piety of Madame de Maintenon. In the preceding year also she had purchased for the sum of two hundred thousand crowns the post of superintendent of the Queen's household, which the Countess of Soissons had been forced to sell when she fled from France under the suspicion of administering poison to various persons. Madame de Montespan had thus endeavoured to acquire a position in the court

independent of the favour of the King, and her hopes were now greatly raised by being freed at least from one rival. But the King's intrigue with Madame de Fontange had produced an effect which she did not fully comprehend; it had taken away the last hold that his former mistress had upon his affection, while it was far from diminishing in any degree those feelings which attached him to Madame de Maintenon. From that time forward his affection for Madame de Montespan may be said to have been at an end, and his farther connexion with her only subsisted from the difficulty of breaking it off with a woman who seemed resolved not to lose her hold upon that court which she had long ruled with almost absolute sway.

In the mean time, notwithstanding the efforts of all her enemies to injure Madame de Maintenon in the opinion of the King, and to discredit her with the royal family in general, she rose daily in the respect not only of the monarch, but of the Dauphiness and of the Queen herself, who conceived nearly as high a regard for her as that which was entertained by Louis. The King gave up to her, during the end of 1680, four or five hours of his time almost every evening, and found in her conversation that mixture of ease and brilliancy, of piety and cheerfulness, of good sense and playful fancy, which was suited to his age, his habits, and his character at the time. Partly by nature, and partly

by art, the cup that was offered him in these interviews was flavoured exactly to his taste, and Madame de Montespan found herself with all her wit and beauty completely neglected for the superior attractions of her rival.

From the letters of various contemporaries, we do not find that a belief was at all general in the court, that anything approaching to criminality existed between the King and Madame de Maintenon. The witty and malicious courtiers indeed played upon the name she had now assumed, and seeing her favour, and the decrease of that of Madame de Montespan, called her generally *Madame de Maintenant*,—*the lady of the present*. The ministers even paid her court, and sought her influence with the King; but still scandal was very little busy with her name, considering the circumstances in which she was placed; and the increasing and apparent regard of the Queen proved a great shield against malice. That regard Madame de Maintenon herself, with that keen good sense which she displayed through life, constantly cultivated most assiduously. She did all that she could to render Maria Theresa happy in domestic life. Louis spent a considerable part of each day in the society of his wife and his family. The Queen, whose heart had been so often wrung by the vices of her husband and the insolence of his mistresses, declared on various occasions, that she had never been so happy or so well treated as since Madame

de Maintenon's influence over the monarch had been exerted; and, in the middle of the year 1682, that princess presented her portrait to the King's friend with her own hand, which Madame de Maintenon herself declares to have been the most agreeable of all the events which had happened to her since her appearance at court.

Still, however, we find that Madame de Maintenon and Madame de Montespan frequented each other's society with some degree of intimacy; so much so, indeed, that the former took her sister-in-law to dine at the house of the latter; and from her letters to her brother, the Count d'Aubigné, we should not discover the change which had taken place till long afterwards.

A period, however, was now rapidly approaching, when the ascendancy of Madame de Maintenon was to become complete, and when the only obstacle to the establishment of her power over the mind of the King was to be removed. Unfortunately, some of the most important letters of Madame de Maintenon, those to Madame de Frontenac, remain imperfect, and without dates. It is clear, however, from one of them, in which she mentions her age at the time, that in 1680 or 1681, the King had offered to her the unenviable and criminal distinction of supplying the place of Madame de Montespan, and that she had refused to accept it. I also feel perfectly satisfied, from reading the whole of her correspondence at the time, and that of many

of her contemporaries, that she made no sacrifice to the growing passion of the King.

At length, on the 30th of July 1683, the troubled and painful life of Maria Theresa was brought to a close by a disease which probably would not have proved fatal, but for the ignorance and obstinacy of the first physician in ordinary, D'Aquin. The Queen, to the last moment of her life, had only continued to show more and more her regard towards Madame de Maintenon, and in her arms she died.

The King was in the neighbouring apartment when Madame de Maintenon was about to retire from the death-bed of her royal mistress. The grief of Louis was extreme, and it is probable that his heart smote him at that moment for all that he had made the dead suffer. Under those circumstances, the greatest consolations that he could receive were, of course, to be derived from friendship.

If he turned his eyes towards Madame de Montespan, if he looked back to La Vallière, he found nothing but matter for reproach; but when he thought of Madame de Maintenon, in whose society he had found so many charms, who had afforded him good counsels, taught him lessons of virtue, and with regard to whom his heart was free from remorse, he beheld at once the person whose sympathy and kindness would be unmingled with anything feeling either bitter or reproachful. To her, therefore, it is pro-

bable, he sent the Duke of Rochefoucault. At all events, it is certain that the Duke, though the personal enemy of Madame de Maintenon, stopped her as she was about to retire, and led her towards the apartments of the King, saying, " This is not the moment to quit him! He has need of you." Madame de Maintenon accordingly proceeded to seek the King, but remained with him only a short time. She immediately joined the Dauphiness, with whom in a few days she proceeded to Fontainebleau, where all her letters speak the deepest grief for the loss of one who had shown her much favour and kindness.

It was in her society, however, that Louis still sought for consolation, and we find that he was constantly with her, visiting her at her toilet; but still there is reason to believe, that whatever might have been Madame de Maintenon's indiscretion in her youth, she had become too wise, too cautious, too experienced in the ways of mankind, to sacrifice that virtue to the wishes of the King which was her principal hold upon his affection.

The death of Colbert, which occurred very nearly at the same time with that of the Queen, added to the grief of the monarch, and for this too Madame de Maintenon was called upon to console him. There can be no doubt that she felt the importance of the privilege, there can be no doubt either, that immediately after the death of the Queen, the whole advantages of her situation flashed upon her mind,

and that the brilliant prospect opened before her, was displayed to her eyes in a moment.

There is a fragment of a letter extant from her to Madame de Frontenac, which is undoubtedly attributable to this period. It is but a fragment, but it displays the agitated thoughts and feelings of a woman, whose moderation was through life a part of her ambition. "There is none but God who knows the truth." She says, " * * * He gives me the fairest hopes. But I am too old to reckon on them. If Madame de Montespan were * * *. It is long, she declares, since she suffered herself to give in to that weakness. Nevertheless, it is not here that one can display a strong mind * * *. I send him away always afflicted, but never in despair." Such are the broken lines in which are shadowed forth the history of the next year in Madame de Maintenon's life. But it is probable, that before the court quitted Fontainebleau, the King had pledged himself to satisfy her religious scruples, by uniting himself to her in the bonds of a private marriage.

Madame de Caylus informs us, that during the first part of the stay at Fontainebleau, she remarked in the conduct of Madame de Maintenon great agitation and uncertainty, but that before the court quitted that place, a calm had succeeded this agitation.

In the beginning of the following year, the death of the Duchess of Richelieu left the post of

lady of honour to the Dauphiness vacant, and the King offered it at once to Madame de Maintenon. It was one uniformly occupied by persons of the highest rank, and Madame de Maintenon declined it on that account, begging the King not to mention that he had offered it to her. Louis, however, related the fact in the evening to the whole court, looking upon the refusal as a proof of infinite moderation. The courtiers, however, who saw more deeply, looked upon it, we are told by Madame de Maintenon's own friends, more as an act of ostentation than of modesty.

The next event of importance which we trace in the life of Madame de Maintenon, was her private marriage with Louis XIV. There is not extant the slightest authentic proof that such a ceremony ever took place, and yet the most sceptical writers of every succeeding age have not doubted the fact. St. Simon himself distinctly and positively asserts that this marriage did take place; nor has any other writer said one word which can bring the matter into doubt. Voltaire, though he gives another date to the transaction, admits fully all the particulars; but he was certainly less likely to be informed upon the subject than either St. Simon or Choisy.

The former places the marriage in the year 1684, namely, during the winter which followed the death of the Queen. His words are, "But it is very certain and very true, that some time

after the King went from Fontainebleau, and in the middle of the winter which followed the death of the Queen — a thing that posterity will never believe, although perfectly true and ascertained — Father La Chaise, the King's confessor, performed mass at midnight in one of the cabinets of the King at Versailles. Bontems, governor of Versailles, first valet de chambre in waiting, and the most in the King's confidence of the four, served this mass, where the monarch and Maintenon were married, in presence of Harlay, Archbishop of Paris as diocesan, of Louvois, (both of whom had, they say, exacted a promise from the King that he would never declare this marriage,) and of Montchevreuil only as the third witness.

The same date is implied by the account of Madame de Caylus, and I am fully inclined to believe that this date is correct, notwithstanding the strong and respectable opinion of M. Monmerque, who believes that the marriage did not take place till the following year. The only question of importance, however, in a historical point of view is, whether Madame de Maintenon ever was *the mistress* of Louis XIV. I use the term in its criminal sense. From every evidence, however, I am decidedly inclined to believe that such was not the case. I do not mean to say, as her admirers have said, that she was too virtuous to become so; I mean that she was too prudent, though virtue and piety very likely joined.



She was too old to be sensible of passion, and doubtless had acquired, with age, experience, and reflection, a considerable share of real devotion. It unfortunately happens, however, that the vices and evil propensities of our age are far more easily reconcileable in the eyes of men with all religious observances, than the vices and follies of our youth. Ambition, avarice, resentment, pride, slander, and malignity, far more easily cover themselves under specious disguises than the active and fiery passions of an earlier period, which, like Athletes, strip themselves naked to struggle openly with our good resolutions, while the more cunning vices of our age strive alone to elude them. Ambition was undoubtedly now the reigning passion in the heart of Madame de Maintenon, and thereunto was added the love of domination, and even a certain sort of ostentation. Yet she contrived to combine with such desires, devotion, piety, benevolence, even apparent moderation.

No sooner was she the wife of Louis XIV. than, following the example of Madame de Montespan, she effaced the arms of Scarron from her carriage, and carried none but her own. She ventured not, either directly or indirectly, to assume those of her husband.

Of her after conduct we shall have to speak more fully. But we must not here—where we have been looking somewhat minutely into the evil points of her character—omit to recall the

testimony in favour of Madame de Maintenon given by one who knew well the country that he lived in, the world in general, and the woman of whom he spoke. After the death of Louis himself, the Regent Duke of Orleans, who, there is every reason to believe, never conceived that any other person but the one he spoke of had ever been actuated by anything but the most selfish motives, paid the very highest compliment that it was possible for such a man to pay to Madame de Maintenon, when he spoke of "her *rare* disinterestedness."

CHAPTER III.

Fresh aggressions of Louis.—War renewed.—Siege of Courtray.—Death of the Count de Vermandois.—Truce of Twenty Years.—Humiliation of Genoa.—Preparations during Peace.—Conduct of the Prince of Orange.—League of Augsburg.—Situation and Conduct of Louis.—War of 1688.—Successes of France.—Ravages in the Palatinate.—Affairs of England.—William Prince of Orange dethrones James II.—General reverses of France in 1689.—Financial embarrassments of Louis.—Successes of Luxembourg in 1690.—The Duke of Savoy declares against France.—Victories of Catinat.—Campaign of 1691.—Capture of Mons.—Death of Louvois.—Victories of Luxembourg.—Campaign of 1692.—Battle of Neerwinden.—Campaigns of the Dauphin.—France invaded by the Duke of Savoy.—He falls ill.—Battle of Maraglia.—Forced march of Luxembourg.—Success of Noailles in Spain.—Naval affairs.—Battle of La Hogue.—Defection of Savoy from the League of Augsburg.—Misconduct of William.—Successes of Vendôme in Spain.—Peace of Ryswick.

LOUIS XIV. had made peace at Nimeguen for the purpose of obtaining repose; but Sir William Temple judged rightly of that monarch when he said, previous to the conclusion of the treaty, “I am of the Prince’s opinion, that he (the King of France) will make peace with a design of a new war after he has fixed his conquests.”

Louis XIV. had before his eyes, when he concluded the peace of Nimeguen, the picture which Colbert had drawn of the exhausted state of the French finances, and that minister’s demonstration of the impossibility of reinvigorating them if the war should be protracted. The Monarch, therefore, sought a temporary relaxation, but nothing was

farther from his mind than to abandon his purposes of aggrandizement. The very first steps which he took after the signature of the peace proved his intention of adding to his dominions by every means, just or unjust. Alsace having been ceded to France, Louis determined to investigate the exact extent of that territory in former years, and to lay claim to every part which had ever been attached to the Province. For the purpose of giving an air of legality to this proceeding he established two chambers of enquiry, or jurisdiction, as they were called, the one at Brissac, and the other at Metz; and on the 22nd of March, 1763, the Chamber of Brissac declared a number of territories belonging to Princes of the Empire to have been dismembered from Alsace, and ordered them to be re-united to that Province under the crown of France. The Chamber of Metz followed the same plan in regard to the territory called the Three Bishopricks, declaring that the bishops had, in former ages, alienated territories they had no right to give away, and the commissioners of Louis had the insolence to cite before the impudent tribunals which were thus established a number of independent Sovereigns, amongst whom were the Elector Palatine, the King of Sweden, and the King of Spain himself, who possessed different lordships on the frontiers, to which Louis now pretended a claim. The Parliament of Besançon at the same time declared Mont Belliard to be a part of France.

All these acts of insulting aggression threw the

Germanic Empire into a state of commotion. The Princes wronged appealed to the Emperor and to the Diet; but the long and desolating war which had so lately afflicted Europe prevented the Empire from asserting vigorously its just rights. The very impudence with which Louis committed his aggressions argued that he was prepared to renew the war; and though a Congress had been appointed to be held at Courtray, nothing effectual was done to satisfy the parties whom the French King had despoiled.

The next act of that monarch was an attack upon Strasburg, a free town upon the Rhine, the regency of which had always shown itself favourable to the enemies of France. It commanded the passage of the great boundary river of Germany by a bridge of boats, and was formidable to both the contending parties in the last war on account of its magnificent arsenal and warlike population. It had affected to hold an armed neutrality; and though, as we have said, the people had shown a strong bias in favour of the Empire, Louis, more politicly than honourably, had not thought fit to attack it while he was actually engaged in hostilities with the Empire, for fear of throwing it more completely into the arms of his enemies. Louvois, however, had fixed his eyes upon it, and had determined, it would seem, from the very moment that peace was signed, to attempt that scandalous infraction of all good faith which he afterwards executed in respect to Strasburg. He

first used every corrupt means to gain a number of the principal persons in the town to the interests of France. The Bishop was, as we have already seen, the devoted creature of Louis, and had been restored by his exertions to his see on the conclusion of the treaty of Nimeguen. He, consequently, used every exertion in favour of France, and carried over a very great number of the principal inhabitants and magistrates, who found no difficulty in persuading the people that in time of peace it would be prudent and economical to dismiss a large part of the garrison. Many difficulties remained still to be overcome, but Louvois had prepared the means for overcoming them. Although a portion of the French troops had been ostentatiously withdrawn from Alsace and Lorraine, a far greater number of soldiers still remained in those provinces than was necessary for their defence. These were distributed amongst the different garrisons, but not attached to them, and were arranged in such a manner that they could concentrate upon a given point near Strasburg at a few days' notice.

An army of 14,000 men was thus held in readiness; and though some suspicions of evil designs were entertained by the neighbouring Princes, their alarm was quieted by an intimation that the preparations on the part of France were made rather with a view against Savoy than any other country, which intimation was confirmed by the march of detachments towards Pignerol. When all was ready,

however, Louvois set out from Paris on the 28th of September 1681, and hurried on to Brissac, where the troops had concentrated. A body of chosen men was immediately thrown forward, and made themselves masters of the principal outworks of Strasburg with scarcely any resistance. Louvois and Monclar, with 12,000 men, appeared at the gates of the city, the Bishop and magistrates had been gained by France, the people were in a state of complete consternation and surprise, and fearing the event of an assault, they capitulated to the French minister on the 30th of September, taking the feeble security of a politician's word for the preservation of their privileges and immunities.

On the very same day, in the south of Europe, the Duke of Mantua, who had been bribed to give up Casal, the capital of the Montferrat, to the King of France, surrendered that city to a French officer; and Louis, proceeding in his system of aggression, made every day new demands upon the Low Countries, though in the preceding July the Spaniards had surrendered to him the county of Chimei, and had done all that they could to satisfy him.

He laid claim also to the town and bailiwick of Alost, declaring that it had been *forgotten* in the treaty of Nimeguen — perhaps the strangest piece of diplomatic impudence upon record! But he knew his own strength and the weakness of his enemies, and on the refusal of Spain to surrender a town which would have brought the French troops to

the very gates of Brussels, he blockaded the city of Luxembourg. His operations against that place, however, were suspended in 1682, from considerations in which we would willingly believe there mingled a considerable portion of real generosity. During his contentions with the house of Austria, Louis had done all that he possibly could to stimulate the Turks to make war upon the Emperor, and thus create a diversion in his own favour. The Sultan, nevertheless, had delayed from day to day, and it was not till the beginning of the year 1682 that formidable preparations announced to Europe that a great expedition was about to pour into Hungary, and support the insurgent population of that kingdom against the measures of the Emperor Leopold.

As soon, then, as Louis became aware that the army of the Turks was likely to invade Christendom, he publicly declared that he would suspend all measures against the Spaniards in the Low Countries, in order that the Spanish branch of the house of Austria might support that branch which occupied the Imperial throne.* The blockade of Luxembourg was immediately raised, and for more than a year Louis XIV. kept his word strictly, making no attempt whatever to disturb the Spaniards in the Low Countries. He endeavoured, however, in the mean while, by negotiation to in-

* He forgot that he had instigated the Turks, and that they were not responsible for his change of policy.

duce Spain to yield him the territory of Alost; but, ultimately finding that he could gain nothing by such means, he determined once more to have recourse to force, perceiving clearly that both Spain and the Empire were too much embarrassed to resist him vigorously in the attempts he was about to make, or to plunge once more into a general war, in order to wrest from him whatever towns he should acquire. He consequently once more invaded the Low Countries, and ordered Luxembourg to be again invested and bombarded, which was vigorously effected by Crequi.

The beginning of these aggressions took place at the very time that Vienna was in the greatest danger. This act left an imputation upon Louis's sincerity, and he has been suspected, probably without just cause, of having waited purposely till the very moment when the greatest embarrassments surrounded the house of Austria, in order to attack the Spanish Netherlands.

A more reasonable suspicion, indeed, is, that he was in hopes the Emperor would be forced by the successes of the Turks to call in the aid of French troops for his deliverance, and that thus the King of France might obtain a footing in the Empire which could never after have been shaken. Leopold, however, was by far too wise to apply to his ambitious enemy, and he saw Kara Mustapha, the Turkish Grand Vizier, pour on at the head of 200,000 men to the very gates of

Vienna, and lay siege to that city itself without demanding any succour at the hands of Louis. The result of that extraordinary campaign, in which the Turks had so nearly established themselves in the Austrian capital, is well known, and details would be irrelevant in this place. Suffice it to say, that John Sobieski, the gallant King of Poland, marched with extraordinary rapidity to the relief of Vienna at the head of a small but resolute force, engaged the Grand Vizier under the walls of the city, and put his immense force to flight with the loss of not more than six hundred men upon the part of the Christians.

In the mean while Louis pursued his operations against the Low Countries; and the Marechal D' Humières, after having entered Flanders, with orders, in the first place, to lay the country under contribution, but to avoid active hostilities, was at length commanded to proceed more vigorously, and consequently laid siege to Courtray, which city fell on the 6th of November 1683.

The only event of great importance which signaled the siege of Courtray was the death of the young Count of Vermandois, the natural son of Louis XIV. by Mademoiselle de la Vallière. He was seized in the camp, to which he had been sent by his father, with a malignant fever, which carried him off after a short illness, just as he was beginning to display a number of virtues and high qualities which had been obscured by the wild passions of youth.

Dixmude was captured on the 10th of that month, and about the same time the French forces took possession of Treves, and demolished the fortifications of that place. The war was urged vehemently against Spain during the end of 1683 and the beginning of 1684: the Spanish fleets were attacked in the Mediterranean; a French army entered Catalonia; and Luxembourg was taken by Crequi, while the King, with an army which, for the first time, saw itself accompanied by a large body of the fair ladies of the court, covered the siege.

The Marechal de Bellefonds, in command of the invading army in Catalonia, was by no means remarkably successful in his expedition. His first exploit, indeed, was to engage the Duke of Bourbonville on the banks of the Ter, towards seven o'clock of the evening. The battle continued till the utter darkness of the night separated the combatants, leaving a victory in the hands of the French, which was only proved by their almost immediately laying siege to Gerona.

They were repulsed from the walls of that fortress, however, with great loss, and no true contemporary account of the siege and its results has transmitted the particulars to the present day. The house of Austria, however, weakened by long and exhausting contentions, and nearly ruined by a vicious system of government, was without any active allies of strength sufficient to enable it to contend successfully with France. Genoa, indeed,

showed a generous but imprudent zeal in the Spanish cause, and made preparations to assist her ally. Louis affected the tone of the despot towards all minor states as well as to his own subjects, and he commanded the Genoese to abstain from launching the ships they had built, as well as to make reparation for various real or imaginary wrongs they had committed. The republic indignantly resisted the dictation of the French King; and immediately a fleet, bearing an army, put to sea, under the nominal command of the celebrated Du Quesne, but really directed by Seignelai, the son of Colbert, who was on board. The troops were disembarked, the fleet anchored before Genoa, and while the French soldiers burned one of the fine suburbs of that magnificent city, the fleet poured the enormous number of thirteen thousand three hundred bombs into the town itself. Genoa was not prepared to resist such prompt and terrible assaults, and after long negotiations, in the course of which the intercession of the Pope was offered and overlooked by the French King, Louis was gratified by seeing the Doge of the Mediterranean Republic present himself with four senators to supplicate pardon at Versailles. By a fundamental law of Genoa the Doge lost his office the moment he quitted the state, but the pride of Louis could be gratified by no less than a change of that law, and the Ducal title was continued by the Genoese to Francesco Imperiale Lescaro, while he went to

the throne of the oppressor to atone for the generous offence of the republic.

Unable to resist, and finding that neither Holland nor England was inclined to enter into an immediate war for the defence of the Low Countries, the Spanish and Imperial governments were at length forced to have recourse to negotiation; and Louis, boldly asserting that all his acts were consistent with the spirit of the treaty of Nimeguen, appointed plenipotentiaries to treat with his opponents, and after much diplomatic intrigue, a truce of twenty years was agreed upon at Ratisbon, in the month of August 1684, by the terms of which Louis retained the town and territory of Luxembourg.

The whole world, however, perceived that the truce was never intended to remain in force for twenty years, though such was its nominal term, and preparations were made by all parties from that day for the war which every one saw was inevitable. Louis did not suffer any part of his forces to remain in inactivity. The ports of Toulon and Brest were enlarged and improved, and the French monarch added an additional and better sort of glory to the renown which he had before acquired, by taking steps to clear the seas of the Barbary pirates. A fleet of Corsairs from Tripoli was attacked and nearly destroyed by Du Quesne, off Chio. Algiers was twice bombarded, and submission was made by the Dey of that place, which was accepted

on the liberation of all Christian slaves, and the payment of a considerable fine.

Neither the aggressions of Louis, nor the extent and preponderance of his power in Europe, were viewed by the monarchs surrounding him with feelings either of indifference or security; but his principal, his most strenuous, and his most determined enemy, was William Prince of Orange, who well understood by what means to excite the dormant enmity which existed in other states into active and energetic operations against the French King. For that purpose he employed both the stimulants of apprehension and ambition. He declared continually, and he made other monarchs believe, that the object of Louis was universal dominion. He pointed to the aggressions which that prince had committed; he showed the frontiers of France increased on every side; he called recollection back to the demands which Louis had made upon Holland; he pointed out the preparations for farther efforts, which were continually going on in France; the increasing navy; the new ports and fortresses which were being constructed on the Ocean and Mediterranean; the schools for the marine, the academy of cadets, the arsenals and depôts which were rising up in every different direction; the fortifications of Huningen and Sarre Louis. His agents were in every court, his representations were addressed to every monarch, and although he could not induce the States of Holland to enter into actual war-

fare, he laid the foundation for those after efforts which so completely thwarted many of the views of Louis at a later period, by inducing other powers to send plenipotentiaries to Augsburg, where that famous league was framed which united all the sovereigns of Europe in an engagement to oppose the ambitious designs of the French King by force of arms, should it prove necessary.

Fear kept the neighbouring princes in a state of sullen inactivity, but that very fear daily increased their jealousy and hatred. The Elector Palatine saw himself likely to be stripped of his dominions by Louis XIV. on the very first pretence. All the princes of the Rhine were apprehensive of the dangerous proximity of the French King. The Emperor saw himself injured and insulted by the French chambers of Brissac and Metz; and foresaw, also, that notwithstanding all renunciations, Louis would snatch at Spain if the King of that country were to die childless. The Elector of Bavaria, who sought to place upon his brother's head the electoral mitre of Cologne, found himself opposed by Louis, who, by striving to bestow it upon one of his creatures of the house of Furstenberg, very evidently showed his purpose of extending his power upon the Rhine.

None of the means which these sources of apprehension and jealousy afforded were left unemployed by the Prince of Orange to stimulate the surrounding princes to active exertions against the French King.

Stripped of the exaggerations of enmity, the ambitious designs of Louis, in all probability, were confined to the purpose of extending his jurisdiction so far as to obtain the frontier of the Rhine : an object for which almost all great French monarchs have sighed. But at the same time there existed between him and the Prince of Orange a kind of silent hatred, which led William to employ every politic act against the French King, and which made Louis sometimes forget his policy to mark his anger and indignation against the Prince of Orange.

Thus we find that in sending the Count d'Avaux into Holland, his orders were so strict, not to hold any communication with the members of the house of Orange, or even with any of their friends, that the plenipotentiary was obliged to remonstrate with his sovereign, and to show that many opportunities of serving him were lost by the prohibition under which the French legation was placed.

William, on the contrary, on his part never forgot his object in his enmity, and with calm perseverance pursued his views in opposition to Louis, who daily, by his frequent attempts to snatch at the possessions of his neighbours, or by the insolent tone of domination which he assumed towards all surrounding countries, increased the number of his enemies, and rendered those who were before adverse to him willing to risk anything in order to put an end to his insupportable exactions.

The death of Charles, Elector Palatine, caused the King of France to put in claims to a part of that prince's territories, in favour of the second wife of his own brother, called Monsieur. A slight dispute between some French merchants and the Spanish government was followed by the sudden appearance of a warlike armament before Cadiz; the nomination of a Bavarian prince to the archbishopric of Cologne called forth the most domineering remonstrances and protests from the King of France, and the wise and equitable determination of the Pope to deprive all ambassadors in Rome of the iniquitous privilege of sanctuary, which existed not only in favour of their own abode, but of the very quarter in which they lived, was instantly resisted by the French King and his ambassador, though the envoys of all other states had consented at once to so just and reasonable a proposal; and a complete schism ensued between France and the Pontifical court. These events all contributed to promote or strengthen the various alliances which were formed during the years 1686-87, and 88, and which, taking a name from the place where the principal arrangements were made, are known by the name of the league of Augsburg, although some of the most important transactions which accompanied the formation of that league took place at Venice, during the carnival of the year 1687.

No doubt can exist that throughout the whole

of those events, which united Holland, Austria, Spain, Bavaria, and Savoy against France, the Prince of Orange was the grand mover, frustrating the arts of his adversaries, overcoming difficulties, bearing down opposition with infinite firmness, skill, and perseverance, and never relaxing till he had seen the league of **Augsburg** formally signed by the Duke of Bavaria and the Duke of **Savoy at Venice**.

The Prince himself, in the mean time, prepared to take advantage of the faults and follies of his father-in-law, James II, who had succeeded to the throne of England in February 1685, and ere two years had passed had contrived so to disgust and irritate the people as to place in opposition to himself and family a very great moral majority in the nation,* which had never regarded him with complacency.

It was in vain that Louis XIV. had attempted to prevent the strong coalition forming against him; but the skill with which William had carried it forward taught the French monarch how formidable was the enemy which was rising up to struggle with him. That the allies, who had opposed him in the former war, should reunite to restrain him from farther conquest was to be expected; but Louis was clearly taken by surprise when he first found, in 1690, that the Duke of Savoy himself, notwithstanding his alliance with France, had, together with the Elector of Bavaria, signed the

* When I speak of a moral majority, I mean of course a majority of the educated and intelligent.

league at Venice in the midst of the pleasures of the carnival, and that England also had so far become a party to the treaty against him, as to guarantee to the Imperial branch of the house of Austria the succession to the throne of Spain in case of the death of Charles II. without children. Full information of these facts, it would appear, was not obtained by Louis for some time after the league had been signed, and he then found himself suddenly in a situation which deeply mortified his pride.

On the attachment of the Duke of Savoy he had counted without much reason, though he had lost no opportunity of strengthening the ties between France and that country by every art which diplomacy could supply. To the Duke of Bavaria, a gallant but versatile prince, the brother of his son's wife, he had sent the Marquis of Villars, already distinguished as an officer and a statesman, who employed every wile and every persuasion to retain the elector in the interests of France, even long after he had signed, unknown to the French envoy, the act which bound him to her enemies. But from the Emperor himself he received, even so late as March 1687, both by letter and by the mouth of the Imperial ambassador, the most positive assurances of his friendly purposes towards France; and with regard to England, the connexion between James II. and France was too strong, he fancied, to be easily broken by any efforts of policy.

In the beginning of the year 1688, the eyes of Louis, which had been partially opened in 1687, were completely enlightened as to his relative situation with all the neighbouring powers except Savoy; and the prospects on every side were most menacing.

The whole of Europe was prepared to resist his pretensions, whether covert or avowed, to the different districts and territories over which he sought to extend his sway. Whether he pretended to extend the frontiers of Alsace, by misconstruing the terms of the treaty of Nimeguen; or to strip Spain of the Netherlands on the same pretence; or to take possession of the Palatinate upon the plea of his brother's title to a part of that country in right of his wife, the sister of the last Elector; or to seat a Bourbon king on the throne of Spain, in case of a failure of direct heirs to the king of that country; or to place one of his creatures in the electoral chair of Cologne, to the exclusion of the young Prince of Bavaria, who had been placed therein by the Pope and the Emperor; Louis found a formidable coalition, prepared to resist him; while measures, both financial and military, had been arranged upon a grand and comprehensive scale, well calculated both to avoid the errors which the allies had committed in the last war, and to insure success to their new efforts. Even Sweden had abandoned him, and had made peace with Denmark for the purpose of being at liberty to take part in the league against France.

With such clouds obscuring the political horizon on every side, had Louis pursued the shrewd system of policy which his own diplomatic skill would have suggested, he would have temporised with his enemies till he had disunited them; and, at that moment, their disunion might have been easily effected. Very slight concessions towards Spain, at a time when the French King stood victorious in every quarter, would have completely defeated the arguments principally used by William of Orange against him, by refuting the assertion that his object was universal dominion: and, at the same time, an opportunity was not far distant for retaliating the charge of outrageous ambition upon William himself, for plunging Spain, and perhaps the Empire, into a war with Holland, and for thus dissolving the league of Augsburg at a blow.

The weak point in that league was the relative position of William, Prince of Orange, and James II. of England. The designs of the latter weak and tyrannical prince were very obvious at the time when the league of Augsburg was signed, and the views of his politic son-in-law became apparent not long after. Had Louis now but acted with moderation, the vehement Catholic party in Europe, the Pope, and the King of Spain, and even the Emperor, must have assisted the papistical King of England in his resistance to the efforts of his heretical son-in-law. Louis himself would have

maintained his true position, would have separated those with whom he was naturally allied, from those to whom he was naturally opposed, and the defalcation of one or two members from the league against him would have left him free at any time to act vigorously, and with his whole force, against the enemies that remained. While he gave some small assistance to Spain in supporting a Catholic monarch on the throne of England, he might with consistency and power have attacked the Dutch from the side of Flanders or Luxembourg, or made good his stand against the empire upon the banks of the Rhine, had the Emperor sided against him.

But he chose the contrary part, and rashly giving way to his anger at the efforts to restrain him, he rushed at once into a contest with all the other powers of Europe, and rendered it, as Fer-rand observes, "a misfortune to James II. to be supported even by the mighty and talented monarch of France." Louvois persuaded him that his armies were invincible, and irritated vanity taught him to shut his eyes both to the clear advantages that were open before him, and to the dangers of the course towards which his anger hurried him. Instead of negotiating, and showing a disposition to yield some part of his demands, or even to maintain the truce to which he had agreed, the King of France was scarcely aware of the league of Augsburg when the whole country resounded with his preparations for the approaching war.

Louis interfered haughtily even in the most domestic affairs of other countries; endeavoured to intimidate the tribunals of Mechlin in regard to a lawsuit pending between the Prince of Orange and the Count de Solre; declared that the decision of the court was unjust, and threatened to indemnify the Count at the expense of Spanish subjects, if the cause were not reconsidered.

At the same time the French King, as the first step of his vengeance upon the Supreme Pontiff, seized upon Avignon, and reunited that district, which had so long remained in the hands of the Pope, to the crown of France. The seizure of Avignon, however, would not alone have been sufficient to announce to the allies that their league was discovered, as various disputes existed between the holy see and the court of France upon matters which we have already noticed sufficiently; and his insolent attempt to dictate in matters where he had not the slightest right to interfere, as in the Mechlin cause, was too consonant to his general practice to excite either apprehension or surprise. But the military preparations of the King were upon so large a scale that there needed no other indication of his determination, and the attention of Europe was only turned to see in what quarter the storm would break. It was soon discovered that Germany was the first object of Louis's vengeance, and the Palatinate the district in which his armies were destined to act.

When all was prepared for the invasion of that territory, the nominal command of the army was bestowed upon the Dauphin, but under him again appeared all the principal generals who had been formed in the late wars. Montclar, Joyeuse, d'Uxelles, and Duras served under the prince; and in September 1688, the troops marched straight towards the Palatinate, while the Imperial and Bavarian armies were still engaged in operations against the Turks.

Immediate success followed the efforts of the French King, and Boufflers, who afterwards distinguished himself so greatly, attacked and took Kaiserlautern, Creutznach, and Oppenheim. Neustadt, Heilbron, Heidelberg, and Mayence fell in rapid succession before the French arms, while the Dauphin,* aided by Montclar and Duras, laid siege to Phillipsburg with Vauban as engineer; and the town surrendered after a short and not very vigorous resistance.

Manheim and Frankenthal were captured on the 11th and 18th of November: Treves, Spiers, and Worms were taken, and Coblenz by the French bombarded before any Imperial force was ready to defend the territory of the unfortunate Elector Palatine.

* A prince who does not appear to have displayed either the talents of his father, or the virtues and sound judgment of his son. I find, however, that he was renowned for hunting wolves, and catching weasels in a barn.

The capture of these cities was preceded by no formal declaration of war; and Louis only published a manifesto putting forth his motives for the conduct he pursued, and alleging, in justification of his attack upon the Palatinate, the claims which his brother had upon that district. But his actions gave the lie to his pretence: the sovereign who goes to recover territories unjustly withheld from his family, takes care not to ravage that which he claims.

Louis XIV, however, on the contrary, distinctly ordered spoliation and pillage; and once again fire and sword swept that rich and fertile, but unfortunate tract, which Turenne had before subjected to desolation. Again, we are told, that the fault was that of Louvois; but we must repeat once more, that if Louis attributed to himself the glory of the great deeds done by his servants, the world is anything but unjust in attributing to himself the crimes which he permitted them to commit.

Nothing could have been more satisfactory to the Prince of Orange, than to behold the French monarch thus put the last grand seal to the league of Augsburg, justify in the eyes of the world the accusations of inordinate ambition which had been brought against him, and compel every power in Europe to take arms against France. He himself, in the mean time, had his eyes fixed upon England, waiting eagerly for the moment when the British nation should be obliged to apply to him for

deliverance from a narrow-minded and bigoted tyrant.

Day by day, during the months of August and September, a number of the most influential men of Great Britain sought refuge under the sword of the Prince of Orange, and William made rapid and skilful preparation both for invading England, in order to wrest the crown from the head of James, and for defending Holland in case it should be attacked by France. His forces were assembled at Nimeguen, so that their destination could not be divined from the place at which they mustered; and he engaged the Elector of Brandenburg, with several more of the German princes, to promise vigorous support to Holland in the event of its being attacked by France.

In the mean time Louis hesitated as to what conduct he should pursue in order to give effectual support to James, and he once again chose the worse advice of Louvois, and rejected the better advice of Segnelai, the son of Colbert, who had succeeded his father in the administration of the marine. The latter, as soon as the preparations of the Prince of Orange were known, and the purpose of them divined, proposed to the King of France to intercept the Dutch fleet ere it could reach the shores of England, and pledged himself to have forty ships of war ready to accomplish that object before William could put to sea.

Louvois, on the contrary, advised the monarch to

offer the English King the aid of land forces, and in other respects to trust to the diversion made upon the side of Germany. The diversion in Germany was a nullity, for the troops of the Dutch were in no degree affected by the attack upon the Palatinate. The offer of an army of thirty thousand men to support James upon the throne, that monarch hesitated to accept, not knowing the extent of his danger till it was too late to avoid it.

William sailed from the shores of Holland for those of England unopposed, landed in Torbay, marched his increasing forces towards London; and James, seeing the whole of his army deserting him, the country rising in every direction in favour of the Prince of Orange, and his proclamations both of menace and conciliation utterly unheeded, embarked for France; and after having once been driven back to London, left behind him that capital, which he was never more destined to behold.*

Mingling injustice with justice and falsehood with truth, serving his own ambition while he delivered the English people, and persecuting the unfortunate while he overthrew a tyrant, the Prince of Orange, not contented with taking the crown of England from the head of the father, denied the legitimacy of the son, whose legitimacy is, we believe, now undoubted; and, instead of becoming the

* I notice these events as briefly as possible, as to enter into any details in regard to the revolution, would require greater space than can here be given.

guardian of his infant brother-in-law, and educating him for the duties of a royal station with the same care which had been shown towards himself, under somewhat similar circumstances, by the great statesman De Witt, at whose murder he had subsequently connived, attempted to vitiate his hereditary claim to the English throne by a silly tale, which was scarcely calculated to deceive a child, but was quite sufficient to serve for a political pretext.

James fled to Louis for aid ; the crown of England was bestowed by the Parliament of England upon William and Mary ; and, while Louis XIV. followed up his aggression upon Germany, by declaring war against Holland,* and sent back the dethroned King to Great Britain to his former dominions with a powerful fleet and a small army, William III, with the support of his people, prepared to resist all foreign aggression, and meeting his adversary upon the banks of the Boyne, gave him that signal defeat which may be said to have terminated the contest for the crown of England. The struggle was protracted for some time in Ireland, it is true, and from time to time efforts were made to raise the adherents of the house of Stuart in England and Scotland ; but that struggle and those efforts only tended to divide the forces of Louis, and to divert his attention from the dangers which threatened him on the Continent,

* 3rd December 1688.

without shaking in any degree the dynasty which had been called to the throne of this country by the people of the realm.

On the contrary, indeed, it would seem that the slight assistance which Louis was enabled to give to the house of Stuart only tended to injure it and himself. The very presence of foreign forces, the very aid of a foreign monarch, was enough to detach the great mass of the British people from a family which required such support; and the persevering enmity of William III. against Louis XIV. might not have been seconded so zealously as it was by Great Britain, if the French monarch had not continually roused the popular indignation against himself by expeditions and invasions, which provoked though they proved fruitless, and not only showed him in the light of an enemy, but made him appear a contemptible one.

In the mean while, however, the effects of the league of Augsburg, and of the wise precautions which its members had taken, were evident upon the Continent; and the campaign of 1689 was remarkable for the first general reverses which the arms of France had yet met with. Holland, Spain, the Empire, and Brandenburg, were now all in arms against Louis, and the troops opposed to him, at least on the side of Germany, were veteran and well disciplined, while his own armies are said to have been chiefly composed of fresh levies. Under these circumstances, he determined to act upon

the defensive, and the Duke de Duras was directed to oppose the progress of the Duke of Lorraine, who was approaching the Rhine at the head of an army which he had commanded successfully against the Turks. Marshal d'Humières was ordered to defend the Flemish frontier against the Prince of Waldec, who was at the head of the Dutch troops, and the Cardinal of Furstemberg occupied the Electorate of Cologne, towards which the Elector of Brandenburg was marching with all speed.

Louis had bad troops and bad officers: Duras, whose business was to defend the Rhine, suffered the Duke of Lorraine to pass the river unopposed, and to lay siege to Mayence. That city, insufficiently supplied, was surrendered to the Imperialists, after a siege of seven weeks, by the Marquis d'Uxelles, who commanded therein; and the Duke of Lorraine, having thus secured his operations, marched forward down the Rhine. The Elector of Brandenburg, in the mean time, had dispersed the troops of the Cardinal of Furstenberg, and attacked Bonn; and now, with the aid of the Duke of Lorraine and the famous Marlborough, he rendered himself master of that place on the 12th of October, after it had been gallantly defended by the Baron d'Asfeld, who died shortly after of his wounds.

Humières, on his part, suffered himself to be defeated at Walcourt by the Prince of Waldec; and though some slight successes were gained by Noailles and Boufflers, they did not serve to compensate for

these severe reverses. Nor was the result of their military operations the only source of triumph and gratification to the allies; the disordered state of Louis's finances soon became public, and it appeared plain that he had plunged into the most unequal war which he had yet undertaken, with a treasury already exhausted, and no such genius as that of Colbert to devise means of replenishing it.

The great minister of finance had been followed in his chief duties by two other men of talents and extended mind; but the situation of affairs was one which probably not even the genius of Colbert could have remedied, and was still less likely to be changed for the better by two persons of very inferior abilities. No measures for obtaining supplies suggested themselves, but such as displayed to the eyes of all Europe the necessities of the King of France. New offices were created and sold; the principal towns in the realm were required to make *free gifts* for the support of the war, the nobility of the court and the country were called upon to send their plate to the mint; and Louis himself ordered all the massive and magnificent plate which ornamented Versailles to be melted down and coined. The designs for that plate had been executed by the first artists in France, and the masterly productions of Cellini were rivalled by the collection at Versailles. All was now cast into the crucible, and Louis, by this sacrifice, at once set an example to his people, and afforded a warning to other

kings; but at the same time he notified lamentably to the inimical states the difficulties to which he was reduced.

The hopes which these indications afforded to the allies, however, proved in a great degree fallacious. In the following year Louis made a better selection of generals, and opposed the veteran armies by which he was attacked by better disciplined troops, and on a better organized plan. The loss of the Duke of Lorraine too, who died at Lintz, on the 17th of April, proved a great detriment to the efforts of the Emperor; and De Lorges, who, under the orders of the Dauphin, succeeded the Duke de Duras in command upon the Rhine, was enabled to keep in check the Elector of Bavaria, who showed an inclination to attack Philipsburg, but was constantly prevented from undertaking that siege.

The principal efforts of the war, during the year 1690, were carried on upon the side of Flanders. The mismanagement of Humières had forced even his friend and protector, Louvois, to recall him; and Louis himself, notwithstanding the enmity of his minister towards the Duke of Luxemburg, chose that great general to replace in Flanders the commander who had proved himself so incapable in the preceding campaign. The King spontaneously granted to the Duke the privilege of corresponding directly with himself; and in his last interview with him, before he set out, proved, in a remarkable

manner the fact that, while he esteemed and employed Louvois' great talents, he understood his character and saw his faults. "I promise you," he said, "to take care that Louvois acts straightforwardly. I will oblige him to sacrifice the hatred which he bears towards you to the good of my service."

No sooner did Luxemburg appear at the head of the troops than the fortunes of France in Flanders entirely changed, and instead of checks and reverses, succeeded an uninterrupted course of success. That great officer, the most celebrated of his age for manœuvring a great army in presence of an adversary, now prepared to display all his talents with a view, in the first instance, to obtain the advantage of position, and then to fight and win a general battle, in order to re-establish the reputation and enthusiasm of the French troops. The army of the Prince of Waldec was greatly superior to his own; but Boufflers, with a considerable corps of troops, was stationed to watch the operations of the enemy upon the Lower Meuse, and was so far under the command of Luxemburg, that the latter could call him to his aid at any moment, provided he did not withdraw him too far from the object which he had in view. By the most skilful manœuvres, then, he drew the Prince of Waldec into the neighbourhood of Fleurus, where but a short march lay between Boufflers and the principal French army. Commanding that general

immediately to join him, Luxemburg covered his colleague's march by amusing the Prince of Waldec with a combat of cavalry, which he caused to pass the Sambre, under the conduct of the Duke of Maine; and the junction of the two French corps was effected before the enemy was aware of the movement of Boufflers. As soon as this object was secured, Luxemburg marched to attack the Prince, who had taken up a position with some heights upon his right.

Luxemburg, in arriving on the field, caused a large body of his cavalry on the left to make a movement in advance under the heights, concealed by them from the enemy, while he advanced with the infantry and rest of the cavalry in battle array, so that, at the moment that he was ready to begin the attack, the cavalry of his left wing, without being separated from the infantry, appeared outflanking the right of the enemy. Thus the Prince of Waldec found himself, when he least expected it, charged upon the right flank at the same time that he was attacked in the centre, and on the left. The right was immediately thrown into confusion; the centre and the left were dispirited, and gave way on perceiving the disadvantage under which they laboured; the Dutch cavalry fled from the field, and the battle was completely lost, though the infantry made a gallant resistance, especially in the small town of Ligny. The superiority thus obtained was preserved by the French troops dur-

ing the whole of the rest of the campaign, and the Prince of Waldec was unable to effect any thing against them.

To counterbalance these advantages, however, Louis was attacked in a quarter where he had the least reason to expect it. We have shown before that the Duke of Savoy had joined the league of Augsburg, but his participation therein had been carefully concealed from the King of France; and it was not till the beginning of this year that Louis found it necessary to take active measures against that Prince. As soon as the Duke perceived that he was discovered, he declared war against France,* although, in fact, he was by no means prepared to carry it on vigorously.

The celebrated Catinat was immediately put in command of the French army, which was collected at Pignerol and in the valley of Susa, for the purpose of opposing the Piedmontese Prince; but by a fault which he committed at the commencement of the campaign, Catinat gave time for the Duke of Savoy to assemble his army, for the Spanish troops to join that Prince from the Milanese, and for a strong German reinforcement to hasten to his aid. Catinat, however, repaired his error brilliantly; he drew the Duke of Savoy by a feigned

* We are generally told that France first declared war against Savoy; but the Marquis de Feuquières, who commanded in Pignerol, proves the contrary. See his Military Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 104.

attack upon Saluces (or Saluzzo) from a strong position which he occupied at Carignan, and then defeated him completely in a general battle, in the neighbourhood of Staffard or Staffarda. Saluces, Suza, and a number of other places in Piedmont were taken immediately; almost the whole of Savoy was reduced by the power of France, and before the end of June in the following year the unfortunate Duke saw himself nearly deprived of his dominions.

In the mean while, however, the famous Prince Eugene was marching to the aid of the Duke of Savoy, and a French officer named Bulonde, who was besieging the town of Coni, raised the siege at that general's approach, but was immediately arrested for so doing, and sent a prisoner to Pignerol. This event had more serious consequences than the loss of Coni, for Bulonde, in his own justification, produced authority from Louvois for what he had done, and Louis XIV. is said never to have forgiven an act which threw such great disgrace upon his arms.

While these events were taking place in Savoy, William III. hastened from England to repair the defeat of the Prince of Waldec, and, notwithstanding all the difficulties of his situation, took the field, in the beginning of 1691, at the head of an army of nearly 80,000 men. But the French were in arms before him; Boufflers had invested Mons early in March, and Louis himself, supported by Luxemburg and La Feuillade, laid siege to that

place about the 22nd of the month.* The King of England marched rapidly at the head of his army to relieve it; but the skilful dispositions of Luxemburg left him no chance of success, and the city surrendered on the 9th of April.

The French monarch then left the army under the command of his great general, who occupied the forces of William, while Boufflers advanced towards Liege, a neutral town, and bombarded that city in revenge for some assistance given to the enemy by its inhabitants. This was undertaken under the express directions of Louvois; but it was the last act in which that celebrated minister had any share. The daily representations of his different generals, the insolence which he occasionally remarked with his own eyes, and the change of his fickle affection in regard to Madame de Montespan, had worked a great alteration in the feelings of Louis towards his minister.

Louvois had received many indications that his favour was gone; the disgrace of Humières, the recall of Luxemburg, the permission given to that general to correspond directly with the King, and the disapprobation expressed by Louis in regard to the horrible ravages committed by Louvois' orders in the Palatinate, all announced to that minister that his fall might not be far distant.

* Mons was invested by Boufflers, not by Luxemburg, as Voltaire declares, and it held out for sixteen days, instead of nine.

At length, in the beginning of July 1691, the report that Bulonde had abandoned the siege of Coni by the unauthorized direction of Louvois, and intelligence that Boufflers, by his orders, had bombarded Liege, reached the ears of the King; while the Duke of Savoy loudly protested that he would never have abandoned the cause of France if Louvois had not treated him with overbearing insolence. Courtiers were not wanting at the same time to point out to Louis that Mayence might have been held out if it had been better provided with ammunition, and that Bonn might have resisted much longer if it had been properly supplied. The threatening aspect of all affairs around him too, the declaration of all the monarchs of Europe that they would not sheathe the sword till France should be reduced to the limits fixed by the peace of Munster, the evil results of Louvois' counsels, and the memory of the warnings of Colbert, all increased the indignation of the King against his minister, and on the 16th of July 1691, some severe rebukes and an indignant gesture are said to have escaped Louis in conversing with him. By some it is supposed that he actually announced to the minister his dismissal; but others on the contrary declare that Louvois, humbled by various reverses, had spoken to the monarch in a tone of humility and grief; and that Louis, touched by such conduct, had offered him consolation without any hint of an

intention to dismiss him. However that may be, Louvois was taken ill while conversing with the King, and returning home, died in a few minutes, after a vain attempt had been made to bleed him in both arms.

Of course there followed an immediate rumour, that Louvois had been poisoned: but his body, on being examined by the surgeons, displayed no mark whatever of any such crime having been practised upon him; and it is natural to suppose that anxiety and grief, united with excessive labours, had destroyed a constitution originally strong.

The campaign of 1691 finished in the Netherlands by the combat of Leuze, in which the Duke of Luxemburg attacked the army of William as it was retreating from that place, and with twenty-eight squadrons defeated fifty of the enemy.*

The Dutch, believing him to be too far off to annoy them in their retreat, had taken no precautions, and were completely surprised; and

* In a letter addressed to Barbesieux by the celebrated Villars, who led the charge against the Dutch, the numbers are stated differently from those generally promulgated by French writers. It is usually reported that seventy-five Dutch squadrons were engaged, and twenty-eight French; but Villars distinctly states that the Dutch had only fifty squadrons present, and that, of the French, only eighteen were positively engaged. I have retained in the text the number twenty-eight in speaking of the French force, as Villars leaves one to suppose that other troops were present on the part of France, though they took no active part in the skirmish.

though the victory of the French general was merely over the rear-guard, it served greatly to increase the reputation of the French arms.

The siege and capture of Namur, by the King in person, signalized the opening of the following campaign; and Vauban was seen on that occasion conducting the operations against one of the *chefs d'œuvres* of Cohorn, defended by Cohorn himself. Luxemburg covered the besieging force, and as soon as the monarch had left the army, which he did after the surrender of Namur, the duke took the command, and after various manœuvres advanced as far as Steinkirk.

Deceived by a letter which a French spy had been forced to write by the enemy, who had discovered him within their lines, Luxemburg suffered himself to be surprised in his camp a little before daybreak. He was himself ill at the moment, and before he was aware that he was attacked a portion of his army was in flight. With presence of mind, and clearness of judgment, that spoke the pupil of the great Condé, he rallied his troops, formed his army, took up a new position, repulsed the enemy three times at the head of the household troops; and, on Bouffler's coming up with a reinforcement of cavalry, forced William III. to retreat before him, after having suffered a loss of between six and seven thousand men.

In the camp of the Duke of Luxemburg appeared on this occasion various numbers of the royal

of France. Philip, afterwards Duke of Orleans, and Regent of France, the Prince de Conti, the Duke of Bourbon, the Duke of Vendome, and the Grand Prior, were all on the field, and all distinguished themselves, fighting in emulation of each other, and setting an example to the soldiery which was not lost.

William, though repulsed and forced to abandon the plain of battle, retreated in perfect order, and maintained the field through the rest of the campaign in so formidable an attitude, that Luxemburg was unable to effect anything of consequence against him.

In the following campaign, the King showed himself disposed to act vigorously on the offensive on the side of Flanders.* Two considerable armies were brought into the field, and while one under the command of Luxemburg assembled in the neighbourhood of Mons, the other, commanded by the King in person, marched towards Gemblours.

The object was to attack the King of England in his camp at Louvain, but Louis was taken ill at Quesnoi, and returned to Versailles,† detaching the greater part of his troops to Germany, under the command of the Dauphin. The whole plan of the campaign was thus altered, and Luxemburg remained with bad troops to make head against the

euquille, Vol. ii. p. 197.

He had been more or less ill from the beginning of the campaign.

English monarch. His business, therefore, seemed to be solely to carry on a system of defensive war, and for that purpose he encamped at Meldert, and by threatening Liege on the one side, and Louvain on the other, contrived to prevent William from undertaking any great enterprise. Not contented with this, however, he in the end determined to make an effort to induce the King of England to separate his forces, and for that purpose made a demonstration of attacking Liege. William was deceived by this feint, and detached a considerable body of men to reinforce an intrenched camp, destined to support that city.

As soon as Luxemburg was aware that the Dutch army was thus weakened, and that the Duke of Wirtemberg had also been detached with ten thousand men, to force the lines of Courtray, he determined to attack William in his camp at Neerwinden.*

Every measure was used to take the English king by surprise, and having succeeded in so doing, Luxemburg gained a complete victory, forced the entrenchments of the Dutch army, and took the greater part of the artillery, remaining in possession of the field of battle, as well as of the village which the troops of William had previously occupied. Nearly twenty thousand men fell in the engagement, of whom eight thousand are said to have been French, and twelve thousand of the allied troops.

The 29th of July 1692.

A number of standards and flags were taken here, as well as at Fleurus and Steinkirk, which occasioned the well-known jest of the Prince of Conti, who called the Duke of Luxemburg, from the number of these trophies that he sent to the metropolitan cathedral, "The upholsterer of Nôtre Dame."

Charleroi was the fruit of the battle of Neerwinden, and Huy had been taken some short time before; but still the skill and resolution of the King of England prevented the French, notwithstanding all their victories, from making any great progress in Flanders, and Louis found that he had a very different enemy to deal with from any that he had encountered before.

While these events were taking place in the Low Countries, the war had been carried on languidly on the Rhine, and with varied success in the south. The Dauphin showed little or no military skill, and not the slightest energy of character; and though accompanied by manifold persons appointed to advise, or rather to direct him, we find that he constantly waited for orders from his father ere he undertook any enterprise of greater consequence than a march from one hamlet to another. He was opposed to Prince Louis of Baden in the campaign of 1693, but effected nothing against him, and returned to France in the month of August, after having spent the summer in marches and countermarches.

The fashion of flattery, however, was so general at this time, that whereas it is always easy to praise a prince for doing nothing, it was then found easy to praise one for doing worse than nothing; and verses of the most laudatory character greeted the Dauphin on his return. There are some stanzas extant, however, attributed to the same period, in which it is difficult to say whether satire or flattery was really intended. Amongst others is the following triplet :

“ Que les bergers de nos cantons
Craindront pour leurs pauvres moutons,
Des loups il (le Dauphin) ne prendra plus guère !”

Either the poet or the prince must surely have been extremely simple-minded.

In Spain, indeed, the affairs of France went well. The Duke de Noailles had taken Seo d'Urgel, an important place on the frontiers, in the year 1691, and having since advanced as far as Roses, had taken that city on the 9th of June 1693. But, on the side of Savoy, the victory of Catinat, and the conquest of the whole of that territory, had not prevented the Duke from entering France in the following year (1692) at the head of a powerful army, and ravaging Dauphinè. Accompanied by the famous Eugene, he took Gap and Embrun, laid the whole country under contribution, burned and pillaged wherever he came, and retaliated upon France, in a slight degree, the horrors which the French

had committed in the Palatinate. Nor, in all probability, would his incursion have stopped here, had he not fallen ill of the small-pox, and found himself incapable of leading his troops with the energy which was necessary for success in such an undertaking. Catinat, inferior to him in cavalry, though superior in infantry, was unable to prevent his advance or retreat; and, left by the necessities of the court in want of horses and means of transport, the French general's situation was for some time dangerous in the extreme.

The illness of the Duke delivered France from his presence; but the great efforts made by Louis in the North, prevented him from strengthening the army of Catinat sufficiently to act with energy against the Savoyard Prince, and it was determined to restrict the campaign of 1693 to the defensive on the part of France. The forces of the Duke had in the mean time been reinforced from Germany, and he opened the campaign with a brilliant and successful movement against Pignerol. He besieged and took the fort of St. Bridget, drove a body of French infantry from the heights in advance of Pignerol, and after bombarding that town, prepared to lay siege to it in form. He is said to have entertained hopes of carrying the war in that one campaign to the very gates of Lyons; but the successes which inspired him with such expectations alarmed the court of France, and Louis detached in haste a large body of cavalry

to reinforce Catinat. That general marched at once to fight the Duke of Savoy, who, presuming on his strength, suffered the French to pour out from the valley of Suza into the plain of Piedmont, abandoned the heights, and was consequently defeated at Marsaglia on the 4th of October.

Catinat, however, could not profit by his victory; he was too ill supplied in every respect to undertake the siege of Coni, and the state of the French armies at this time marks as plainly that Louvois was dead, as the state of the finances speaks the loss of Colbert.

The rashness with which he had plunged into war was now but too visible to Louis; and the failure of the crops in 1693, together with the disastrous result of some financial speculations which entirely failed, added to the distress of the monarch and the country. The peasantry were in a state of destitution, the treasury exhausted, the people of the capital murmuring loudly, and the armies only supplied with troops, because men found it less fearful to meet the enemy in the field than to encounter famine at home. Under such circumstances Louis determined that in all quarters the war on the part of France should be conducted during 1694 on the defensive.

The Dauphin and the Duke of Luxembourg, at the head of a considerable army, kept the King of England in inactivity by menacing Liege and Louvain till the harvest was nearly over; when

William, having by skilful manœuvres gained two or three days' march upon them, hastened towards Flanders in order to seize upon Courtrai, and attack the maritime cities.

By one of the most extraordinary forced marches on record, however, Luxemburg in four days traversed, with his whole army, a tract of more than forty leagues, outstripped the allies, and arrived on the Scheld in time to frustrate all the designs of the enemy. This was the last great exploit of the celebrated Duke of Luxemburg, who, returning to France, died on the 4th of January following, leaving the French troops terribly dispirited by the loss of a commander who had led them so frequently to victory.

Notwithstanding the King's determination to carry on the war solely by a defensive campaign, the army of Marshal Noailles was greatly reinforced in the hope of that general being able to gain some advantage over the Duke of Escalona, Viceroy of Catalonia. According to the Spanish account, Noailles had under his command thirty thousand men, and finding himself opposed by only nineteen thousand, he immediately began to act on the offensive, forced the passage of the Ter, and gained a complete victory over Escalona, on the 27th of May.

Palamos, Gerona, Hostalric, and Castelfolli^t*

* Voltaire gives a very false account of the successes of Noailles, which, in a political point of view, were most important.

were taken, one after another, with extraordinary rapidity; and it is probable that Barcelona would also have been attacked, had not the Admiral Tourville, who during the first part of the campaign had powerfully co-operated with the French army in Catalonia, been forced to draw off from the coast by the approach of the allied fleet. These rapid successes on the side of Spain were most gratifying to Louis, not only inasmuch as they kept up the spirit of the nation and the soldiery, but inasmuch as they tended to promote a great object which he had kept in view from the very commencement of the war, and which was to detach Spain from the league against him, and induce that country to make a separate peace.

Whether his purpose was merely to divide the allies, or whether Louis flattered himself with the hope of obtaining, in any separate treaty, some advantageous concessions regarding his contingent claims to the Spanish succession, I do not know; but at the breaking out of the war it is clear that he laboured hard to prevent the Spanish Monarch from taking any part therein, except in a conjoint effort with him to restore James II. to the throne of England; and he now strove, as well by negotiation as arms, to detach Charles from the league of Augsburg. The efforts of William III. and the German party at the Court of Spain frustrated all the attempts of Louis; and the evident depression of the French King, together with the bold attacks

made upon his coasts by the English fleets, gave the Spanish government courage to carry on the war, notwithstanding the state of exhaustion to which the finances of that country were reduced.

The war by sea had been waged with various success, and the high state to which Colbert, and his son, the Marquis de Segnelai, had brought the French marine, was evinced by its being able to contend unaided against the navy of both Holland and England. The first successes were on the part of France, the fleets of which country, under Tourville and the Count de Chateau Renaud, defeated those of England and Holland in May 1689 and July 1690. Tourville even ventured a descent upon the English coast at Teignmouth, and burnt some of the shipping; but on the 29th May 1692, took place the famous battle of La Hogue, in which the French admiral was signally defeated, losing fourteen of his largest vessels.

The fleet of Tourville was considerably inferior to the combined Dutch and English fleets with which it engaged, but it had on board nearly twenty thousand land forces, destined to make a descent in Great Britain. Louis had, under these circumstances, commanded Tourville to attack the allies at all risk; and that great officer obeyed to the letter, not waiting for the junction of D'Estrees, whose vessels would have rendered the French equal, if not superior, to the enemy. In the following year, however, Tourville again obtained some

advantages, totally defeating Admiral Rooke, who was convoying home the Turkey fleet.

Much honour is due to the French marine for their efforts during this war: the general superiority of the two great maritime powers, however, would seem to be established by the fact, that they not only kept the narrow seas, but made, in the course of 1693 and 1694, a number of attacks upon the French coast, bombarding St. Malo, Dieppe, and Havre, and attacking Brest, Cherbourg, and Dunkirk. At Brest, indeed, the land forces, which effected their descent, suffered a very severe loss, and throughout the war the commerce of England and Holland was injured deeply by the efforts of such daring men as Jean Bart and Du Gué Trouin, both of whom had been common sailors, and both of whom had risen by their gallant and extraordinary enterprises against the enemies of their country to that rank and estimation which they so justly merited.

In every state throughout Europe the evils of war were now felt and understood, and the lesson taught so often, and so soon forgotten, was once more called to mind. Military and naval efforts were relaxed on all sides: on the Rhine the Prince of Baden and the Marechal de Lorges, both in health, did little but observe each other, and though the Duke of Savoy made himself master of Casal on the 11th July 1695, no other military

event of any consequence took place on the side of Italy, where Louis entered into negotiations with the Duke, and succeeded, in the following year, in detaching him from the league of Augsburg. As the price of his defection the whole of his territories were to be restored to him, with the exception of Suza, Nice, and Mont-meillan, which were promised to be delivered also on the signature of a general peace. Money was added to render the consent of a needy Prince more ready; and Louis endeavoured to bind him to the cause of France by engaging to unite the Duke's daughter, then eleven years old, to the young Duke of Burgundy, eldest son of the Dauphin and presumptive heir to the crown of France. In return for all these advantages the Duke promised to obtain from the Emperor a pledge that Italy should be considered as neutral ground, and if the allies refused such a pledge, then to join the forces of Savoy to those of France, and give a free passage to the French through his dominions. In consequence of this treaty, which was concluded by himself, Catinat, and Tessé, and rendered remarkable by the presence of a pilgrimage to Loretto, where the terms were arranged, he applied to the Emperor for a reiteration of the neutrality of Italy, and was refused. He then hastened, with a facility which distinguished him through life, to abandon his friends and join his enemies, and within one month

was generalissimo for the Emperor in Italy fighting against France, and generalissimo for the King of France in Italy fighting against the Emperor.

Previous to this change, however, the King of England opened the campaign of 1695 in the Netherlands by the siege of Namur. The death of Luxemburg had placed the French army of Flanders under the command of the incapable Marshal Villeroi; and William, feeling that his enemy was no longer to be much respected, assumed at once the offensive. He concealed his design upon Namur under a variety of manœuvres which kept the French generals in suspense; and then leaving the Prince of Vaudemont to protect the principal Spanish towns in Flanders, he collected his troops suddenly; and while the Duke of Bavaria invested Namur, he covered the operations of the siege with a considerable force. Villeroi now determined to attack the Prince of Vaudemont, but twice suffered him to escape; and then, after having apparently hesitated for some time how to drive or draw the King of England from the attack upon Namur, he resolved to bombard the city of Brussels, never pretending to besiege it, but alleging as his motive for a proceeding which was merely destructive, the bombardment of the maritime towns of France by the English. During three days he continued to fire upon the city, ruining a great part thereof, and then withdrew to witness the surrender of the citadel of Namur on the 2nd September, the town itself

having capitulated on the 4th of the preceding month.

As some compensation, though but a poor one, for the loss of Namur, and the disgrace of the French arms in suffering such a city to be captured in the presence of eighty thousand men, Montal took Dixmude and Deynse in the course of June. No blame could be attached to the officers who actually defended Namur, for the Count de Guiscard, who was governor of the place, and Boufflers, who had thrown himself into it, did all that courage and skill could do to hold it out to the last; and so well convinced was William of the superior skill of the latter of those officers, that he would willingly have kept him as a prisoner of war, notwithstanding the terms of capitulation. He was, indeed, detained by the allies for some time upon the pretence, that an infraction had taken place of the terms granted to Dixmude and Deynse, but was soon after liberated, and lived to render good service to his country at an after period. The only after-event of any importance which occurred in Flanders during this war was the capture of Ath by the French in the year 1697, while negotiations for peace were going on with activity at Ryswick.

Spain, however, was less able to oppose the arms of France than the other allied powers, and in Catalonia Louis carried on vigorously a war which he suffered to languish in all other quarters. The Marechal de Noailles had fallen ill, and was un-

able to pursue the advantages he had gained; but the Duke of Vendome,* who had been hitherto neglected by the jealous policy of Louis, was now called to command in the necessity of the moment, and frustrated all the efforts that the Spaniards were eagerly making to recover Castelfolli, Hostalric, and Palamos. The Spanish troops, indeed, behaved gallantly throughout the campaign, and in the attack upon the lines at Castelfolli were repulsed with great difficulty, and not without severe loss on the part of France; the want of military skill in the Spanish commanders alone rendered their bravery unavailing.

By this time the negotiations for peace had actually commenced, and Vendome, whose political foresight was as great as his military capacity, saw that ere long he would be obliged to abandon those conquests which Noailles had acquired. He therefore at once resolved upon dismantling the towns which had been taken, and waited for the commencement of a new year in expectation of peace. The demands of the allies, however, were great, and peace was not concluded so soon as had been anticipated. It became necessary for Louis to make vast efforts in order to obtain even moderate terms; the army of Catalonia was consequently considerably reinforced, and while the forces of France and Savoy

* He had never before been suffered to command in chief, although his fame was so well established that a Spanish contemporary says he was, "mirado como uno de los mejores generales de la Francia."

penetrated into the Milanese, and laid siege to Valpencia, on the Po, Vendome advanced once more into the heart of Catalonia, defeated the Prince of Darmstadt, who now commanded the Spanish troops, though not without a severe struggle and great loss, but could effect nothing of importance till the following year, when he laid siege to Barcelona, and, aided by the French fleet under D'Estrees, succeeded in capturing that important city fifty-two days after the opening of the trenches.

While these events had been going on in Europe, a destructive and predatory sort of warfare had taken place on the seas and in the colonies of the belligerent powers. It would be tedious to recount all the captures that were made on either part; but it is evident that the allies suffered much more severely than Louis himself. It is true that, as Voltaire remarks, French commerce was comparatively safe only because it was comparatively small; but we must remember that in attacking the commerce of England and Holland, the French King assailed his enemies in the most vital part.

The great loss thus sustained by the maritime powers, the fall of Barcelona, the capture of Ath, and the taking of Carthagená, with the immense detriment that followed to Spain and the great advantage to France, rendered the allies more tractable; while the terrible condition of his people, the utter exhaustion of his finances, the want of all probable resources, and the growing discontent of

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His subjects, showed Louis XIV. that he must sacrifice much to obtain peace.

Louis felt, perhaps, that the bright period of his reign was past, that a new epoch in the human mind had arrived, and that the character of that epoch was feebler than that of the last; that he might have good generals, but that Condé, Turenne, and Luxemburg were no more; that he might have skilful ministers and artful negotiators, but that Colbert, Louvois, and D'Estrades were gone, while Croissy, the last of that constellation, had just laid his head beside that of his brother; that the reign of originality and energy was over; and that he must be content to manœuvre where he formerly fought, must persuade where he had commanded, and must use art instead of vigour.

Louis was therefore inclined to yield much, and the allies were also eager for peace; but there was one point in the situation of Europe which, notwithstanding the admission of Torci, that the peace of Ryswick was concluded through mere weakness of warfare, I cannot but believe to have greatly influenced the actions of all the negotiating powers. Torci, we must remember, was at that time young, and though he had been permitted to succeed his father, Colbert de Croissy, as secretary of state, and conducted the negotiations at Ryswick, he was evidently not fully trusted by Louis. Every measure was decided in the council, and Torci was but the

agent. It is probable, therefore, that there operated throughout the whole affair many secret motives with which he was unacquainted; and it would seem most improbable that either Louis or the allies, in concluding so important a treaty as that of Ryswick, should not have been influenced by the situation of the King of Spain.

Charles II. was childless, and the direct line of Austrian Kings of Spain seemed likely to come to an end. That likelihood had been increased in the year 1696 by a violent fever which seized the Spanish Monarch in the month of September, and reduced him to the brink of the grave. He recovered, indeed, to a certain degree, but his health had been so far shaken at the time of the signature of the treaty of Ryswick, that it was notorious in Europe that he could not live many years. The vast dominions thus left without an heir would, beyond doubt, be struggled for by several powerful claimants. The eventual decision of their rights would affect, more or less, every power in Europe, and it was necessary for all to pause and look around them, to recruit their finances, to decide upon their line of policy, and to collect all their strength in order to assume such an attitude, or follow such a course, as circumstances might render necessary when the moment for decision arrived. That such motives might not be avowed is very possible; but that the situation of Spain and the failing health of the Spanish King had no secret influence upon the

conduct of Louis XIV. and the allies of Augsburg is not to be believed.

The history of the overt operations which brought about the treaty of Ryswick, as far as it is necessary to notice them here, is soon given. Almost from the commencement of this war, as in the war which preceded it, efforts had been made to restore peace. Charles XI. King of Sweden, had offered to become mediator between the King of France and the allies in the year 1690; but, though not directly refused, his mediation was not directly accepted. He persevered, however, and in 1693 there was a glimmering of pacific feeling on the part of Louis. In 1794 some conferences were held at Liege, but without effect. In the following year more important negotiations took place at Utrecht, and something like a preliminary treaty was sketched out. In 1696 Louis succeeded in his attempt to detach one of the confederates from the league, and the sudden defection of the Duke of Savoy spread doubt amongst the allies. Thus one very great object was gained; Louis was willing to sacrifice territory, but not reputation, and was ready to grant immense concessions, while at the same time he assumed the tone of power, and demonstrated that he was capable of carrying on the war both by refusing a suspension of hostilities during the negotiations, which the allies demanded, and by the capture of Ath in the Low Countries, Barcelona in

Spain, and Carthagena in the new world. Regular communications regarding peace having been once established, Ryswick, near the Hague, was appointed for the meeting of plenipotentiaries; and Harlay, Torci, and Callières appeared at that place as representatives of Louis. The articles which had been formerly sketched out at Utrecht formed the base of the treaties now agreed upon; and Louis yielded far more than could have been expected from one so proud and so successful. All parties declared that they took the treaties of Munster and Nimeguen for the ground-work of their present demands; and though there was scarcely a shred of those parchments left together, the pretence was admitted as valid, and served to cover over the interested selfishness of all. The treaty of Munster in 1648, and the treaty of Vienna in 1815, are, probably, the only two treaties of peace that modern Europe has ever seen which had not in view a speedy and convenient renewal of the war. Such had been the case in regard to the treaty of Nimeguen; such was now the case with the treaty of Ryswick.

Louis granted to Holland the most extraordinary commercial rights, and surprised all Europe, but especially his own subjects, by securing to the Dutch, in their trade with France, privileges which were denied even to the French themselves; while in return for these privileges he obtained nothing

but the restitution of Pondicherry. The treaty with Holland was signed at midnight, on the 20th of September 1697.

The second treaty was with Spain, and signed an hour after the first, but here even more important concessions were made. Everything that had been taken in Catalonia was restored, and in Flanders a large and important tract of country, filled with strong frontier towns, was given up to Spain, comprising Luxembourg, Charleroi, Mons, Courtrai, Ath, and the county of Chimei. On the side of the Rhine all those territories which Louis had unjustly claimed, and which had been united to France by the decree of the Chambers of Metz and Brissac, were restored to their former possessors, and the town and territory of Dinant was given up to the Bishop of Liege. On the following day a treaty with England was signed, by which William III. was recognized King of that country, and Louis bound himself to give no aid to the enemies of that monarch.

The Austrians proceeded more slowly, and the treaty with the Empire was not signed for some time. Friburg, Brissac, Kehl, and Phillipsburg, however, were either restored to Germany or acknowledged to belong to that country. The fortresses of Strasburg, on the Rhine, and three other important posts on which Louvois and Vauban had expended infinite skill and money, were resigned.

Lorraine, with a very slight diminution, was restored to its legitimate Sovereign.

This was no longer that Duke of Lorraine who had fought so gallantly for the Emperor. In dying at Lintz the exiled Prince had written to Leopold reminding him of his services, and beseeching him to protect his family. His words are remarkable: "According to your orders," he said, "I set out from Innsbruck to go to Vienna, but I am stopped here by a greater Master. I go to give him an account of a life which I have entirely consecrated to you; do not forget that I have a wife who is related to you; children, to whom I bequeath nothing but my sword; and subjects, who are suffering under oppression." The Emperor did not forget; and on the present occasion Duke Leopold was, at his absolute demand, restored to his states, where he applied himself with generous care to wipe away the tears from the eyes of those who had loved him and suffered in his cause.

Such were the three treaties which are in general comprised under the title of the peace of Ryswick, and in ratifying that treaty Louis XIV. virtually acknowledged that for nine years he had continued a bloody and destructive war, had ravaged the Palatinate, had cast away the lives of many hundred thousands of men, had exhausted the finances of his realm, had brought desolation over wide tracts of fertile and peaceful land, had ruined commerce and

arts, had carried misery to the hearths of his own people, and widowed many a once happy heart throughout all Europe, in vain, if not unjustly.

Those who have written on the subject say that his motives in concluding this peace were virtuous. It may be so ; but those motives were somewhat tardily felt, and were lamentably soon forgotten.

CHAPTER IV.

A View of the Prisons in France. — The history of the Man in the Iron Mask. — Theories regarding him. — Reasons for believing that he was neither of the Persons whom Authors have attempted to identify with him. — The subject as dark as ever.

WE have now come to a point at which it is necessary to speak collectively of one train of events in the history of Louis XIV. which are entirely of the most painful nature. The course of his licentious life, the progress of his unprovoked aggressions upon other countries, his ambitious graspings at territories not his own, his extinction of the last sparks of liberty amongst his people, and the miseries which all his faults brought upon the nation, are each painful enough to dwell upon. But there is a still darker page in the history of Louis XIV. which, as far as we have the power, must be laid fully open. That page shows in the clearest manner, how a heart, not naturally unkind nor ungenerous, may become hardened, corrupted, blackened by the use of unrestrained authority, and reads the

great lesson, that to no human being, fallible as we all are, should despotic power be intrusted, for his own sake as well as that of others. The page I speak of contains the records of the prisons of France during the reign of Louis XIV.

It must not be forgotten that, during the wars of the Fronde, the parliament of Paris had asserted, as a right of the French citizens, that every man deprived of his liberty on any pretence whatever, should be brought before his lawful judges within a certain number of hours, and this great and fundamental principle of civil liberty was admitted to the fullest extent by all the wiser members of the council of Anne of Austria. From the moment, however, that Louis XIV, taking up the reins of government as they dropped from the dying hands of Mazarin, set his foot upon the willing necks of the French people, that great and fundamental principle was never heard of, and its extinction tended as much or more than any other cause to the great, awful, and bloody catastrophe which closed the eighteenth century.

The first exercise of his uncontrolled power over the freedom of his subjects was in the lamentable case of Fouquet, on which we have dwelt at large. But we have now to turn to acts in which tyranny, the madness of despotism, was aggravated by almost every circumstance of deceit and injustice. An immense number of imprisonments took place immediately after the arrest of Fouquet, when, under the

guidance and direction of Colbert, Louis XIV. strove to wring from the hands of the public usurers a part of that immense wealth which they had amassed by the equal pillage of the King and of the people. However illegal some of the proceedings were which took place against them, there can be no doubt that their arrest, imprisonment, and trial were abstractedly just. A number of other persons were afterwards arrested, some on just and weighty grounds, some on the mere suspicion of having taken part in the frightful system of administering poison which was at one time so general in Paris. A number of other persons were afterwards deprived of their liberty, for a longer or a shorter period, on account of those religious opinions, the persecution of which we have noticed elsewhere. But on none of these shall we rely as instances of the great evil which despotic authority may become even in the hands of a monarch naturally placable, inasmuch as in all these cases the laws of the land, however much perverted and misapplied, were brought to lend a veil to the passions or purposes of individuals. We shall, however, pause for a moment, merely to mention some particular cases mixed up with these.

In the year 1663 the number of prisoners in the Bastille was fifty-four, and amongst that number was Fouquet. In the same prison and about the same time were several persons, whose only crime was having written or printed papers in defence of

a man who was himself denied almost all means of defence ; and there was likewise there a lady, the charge against whom is thus curiously expressed : " Suspected culpable of treason, projected against the King of Denmark."

In the following year we find thirteen prisoners, of whose crimes or imputed crimes we do not, in general, discover any exact traces. In 1681, about the time of the poisoning, the number is increased again to fifty-two; and in 1684 the number was fifty-one, and many of the crimes alleged are of a political nature. Thus, a Don Thomas Crisafi, and his brother Antonio, were imprisoned on the suspicion of intriguing with a Spanish ambassador, " contrary to the service of the King." Two of the servants of the Ambassador of Venice are imprisoned for having said, in the ante-chamber of the King at Versailles, " Who could prevent me from going to kill the King?" Others are imprisoned for machinations against the person of the King. One native of Holland is imprisoned for carrying on intrigues with the house of Orange : one is marked out in the register as having received a letter from the Secretary of State to inquire, how long he had been a prisoner, and why? This is the second time within ten years that such an occurrence takes place ; and there can be very little doubt that the oblivion into which a man fell when the doors of the Bastille had closed upon him, often affected the ministers who sent him there as well as all others. .

The prison of the Bastille, however, was not the only one in which suspicion and resentment plunged their victims. Many of the citadels of France, but especially the citadel of Pignerol, the fortress at the Isle St. Marguerite, that at Bourdeaux, at Angers, and at Angouleme, were remarkable for receiving those whom the hand of tyranny or injustice sought to remove from communication with their fellow men.

It will be seen, by what we have stated, that the exercise of absolute authority gradually made the French Monarch more daring in the use of his despotic power; and we find that he soon lost those scruples which, in the first instance, made him cover injustice with the veil of law; and that he dealt with his subjects as if their liberty, at least, if not their lives, depended solely on his will and pleasure.

We shall now proceed to notice the most remarkable and extraordinary instance in which this despotic authority was exercised during his reign, an instance, indeed, so remarkable from some of the circumstances which accompanied it, that it has remained a mystery and a wonder to the present day, and has, consequently, caused inquiries and investigations which have brought to light two, if not three, other acts equally iniquitous, equally dark, and equally cruel. I speak of the arrest and lengthened imprisonment of the famous *Man in the Iron Mask*, in regard to whom a great variety of hypotheses

have been formed, but whose real name, fate, and history are, perhaps, as dark as ever.

The first detailed information which was given to the world from any creditable source concerning the unfortunate person who spent a great part of his life in a state of the most painful imprisonment, was afforded by Voltaire in his "*Siecle de Louis XIV.*" Popular rumours and wild and romantic stories concerning the prisoner had, however, been current some time before, as well as discussions carried on in a more regular historical form in the *Journal des Savants*, and other periodical papers, concerning the authenticity of a work called, *Memoires Secrets pour servir à l'Histoire du Perse*, which would have been hardly worth inquiring into had it not been filled with allusions to the history of Louis XIV, and had it not contained a history of a masked prisoner, bearing in all its particulars a strict resemblance to that which was current in the shape of rumours regarding the Man in the Iron Mask. This work has also been attributed to Voltaire, though there is very little reason to believe that it was his production. We shall, therefore, pass it over without further notice, and at once come to the first historical mention of the Man in the Iron Mask by Voltaire himself, giving his own words upon the subject, — though the extract be somewhat long, — as we may have to sift them hereafter, and to point

out how much that celebrated writer yielded to popular report and ill-authenticated anecdotes.

“ Some months after the death of this minister ” (Mazarin), says Voltaire, “ an event occurred which is without example ; and what is not less strange, all historians have been ignorant of it. There was sent with the greatest secrecy to the island of St. Marguerite, in the sea of Provence, an unknown prisoner, above the ordinary height, young, and of the noblest and handsomest countenance. This prisoner on the road wore a mask, the chin of which had springs of steel, which left him the liberty of eating with the mask upon his face. An order was given to kill him if he discovered himself. He remained in this island until an officer of condition, named St. Mars, governor of Pignerol, having been made governor of the Bastille in the year 1690, went to take him in the island of St. Marguerite, and conducted him, still masked, to the Bastille. The Marquis of Louvois went to see him in that island before his removal, and spoke to him standing, and with a degree of consideration which approached respect. This unknown person was brought to the Bastille, where he was lodged as well as any one can be in the castle. Nothing was refused him which he demanded. His chief taste was for linen of extraordinary fineness and for lace. He played upon the guitar. A sumptuous table was kept for him, and the governor seldom sat down before him. An old

physician of the Bastille, who had often treated this singular man in his sickness, has said that he had never seen his face, although he had often examined his tongue and the rest of his body. He was admirably well made, this physician said; his skin was a little brown; he interested one by the mere tone of his voice, never complaining of his condition, and never hinting at whom he might be. This unknown person died in 1703, and was buried by night at the parish of St. Paul. What doubles our astonishment is, that when they sent him to the island of St. Marguerite there disappeared from the face of Europe no person of importance. This prisoner certainly was such, from what happened during the first days that he was in the island. The governor himself placed the dishes on his table, and retired after having shut him in. One day the prisoner wrote with a knife upon a silver plate, and threw it out of the window towards a boat which was at the shore nearly at the foot of the tower. A fisherman, to whom the boat belonged, picked up the plate and carried it back to the governor. He, in astonishment, asked the fisherman, 'Have you read what is written on this plate, and has any one seen it in your hands?'

" 'I cannot read,' replied the fisherman. 'I have just found it. Nobody has seen it.' This peasant was detained till the governor had satisfied himself that he could not read, and that the plate had been seen by nobody. 'Go,' said he to him;

‘you are very happy not to be able to read.’ Amongst the persons who had immediate cognizance of this fact there is one worthy of every confidence, who is still living. M. de Chamillart was the last minister who had the keeping of this strange secret. The second Marechal de la Feuillade, his son-in-law, informed me, that at the death of his father-in-law, he besought him on his knees to inform him who was the man known only under the name of the Man in the Iron Mask. Chamillart replied that it was a state secret, and that he had taken an oath never to reveal it. Moreover, there are many of my contemporaries remaining who can prove the truth of what I assert, and I do not know any fact either more extraordinary or more clearly established.”

Voltaire adds, in another place, that some days before the prisoner's death, he informed his medical attendant that he believed he was about sixty years of age; and such is the account given by that celebrated writer, though any one who reads it will perceive at once that it is principally based upon the anecdotes of the time. In two instances, however, those anecdotes are substantiated by reference to the persons from whom he received them, and may therefore be admitted as historical facts. His reference to La Feuillade would establish clearly the existence of a prisoner so masked, even if there were no other proof of the fact; and in a note upon that part of his account where he speaks

of the old physician of the Bastille, who had seen and treated the masked prisoner, he refers to a famous surgeon, still living, the son-in-law of that physician, and calls him to vouch for the accuracy of the particulars which he gives from that source. He appeals also at the same time to the testimony of Monsieur de Bernaville,* who succeeded St. Mars as governor of the Bastille. We may, therefore, regard as well authenticated the account given by Voltaire of the personal appearance, manners, and deportment of the masked prisoner.

There are, however, other and more convincing historical proofs of the existence of the man in the mask, and of some of the facts connected with his imprisonment. We find, from the authentic manuscript journal of Monsieur Dujonca, the King's lieutenant at the Bastille, that St. Mars, of whom we have had so often to speak, arrived at the state prison of Paris, whereof he had been lately appointed governor, on the 18th of September 1698, at three o'clock in the afternoon, "bringing with

* Voltaire had every opportunity of hearing the facts he mentions from Bernaville, as that officer was governor of the Bastille in the year 1717, when the historian himself was confined for several months in that prison. Voltaire, it would seem, was very well treated by the governor, and lived on terms of friendship with him. In another place Voltaire permits the name of the surgeon, whom he had called upon to bear witness of what his father-in-law had related, to appear. It was Marsobon, who was first household surgeon to the Marshal de Richelieu, and afterwards to the Regent Duke of Orleans.

him in a litter *an ancient** prisoner whom he had had ~~the~~ Pignerol, whose name is not mentioned, whom they keep always masked, and who was placed at first in the tower of La Basiniere, to wait till night, and whom I myself conducted afterwards, about nine o'clock at night, to the third chamber of the tower of La Bertaudiere, which chamber I had taken care to have furnished with every thing before his arrival, having received an order to that effect from M. de St. Mars. In conducting him to the said chamber, I was accompanied by the Sieur Rosarges, whom M. de St. Mars had also brought with him, and who was charged to attend upon and take care of the said prisoner, who was boarded by the governor."

These are the express words of Dujonca, and his account is confirmed by a leaf which had been torn out of the Great Register of the Bastille, referring to the year 1698. That leaf indeed is lost, but it had been previously accurately copied by the hand of M. Chevalier, major of the Bastille, in 1775, and sent with other papers to M. Anelot,†

* The term which I have translated ancient, is *ancien*, which does not apply to the age of the prisoner, but merely to the length of time which he had been imprisoned.

† Some writers with a leaning to particular theories, have insinuated that Chevalier might have altered the paper that he pretended to copy. But a moment's consideration would show that he could not have so trifled with a minister who had the opportunity under his hand of verifying the accuracy of the copy. Indeed it would appear probable that the leaf torn out

then one of the ministers. Besides confirming every fact mentioned by Dujonca, this leaf bore some particulars which identify the prisoner brought by St. Mars with the famous Man in the Iron Mask. In the column which gives the names and qualities of the prisoners, he is there described "Formerly prisoner at Pignerol, obliged always to carry a mask of black velvet, whose name and qualities have never been known."

In the column headed "*Motive of detention*," it is written, "It has never been known;" and in the column of observations is written, "This is the famous Man in a Mask, whom nobody has ever seen or known." "Nota.—This prisoner was brought to the Bastille by M. de St. Mars, in his litter, when he came to take possession of the government of the Bastille, coming from his government of the islands of St. Marguerite and Honorat, and whom he had heretofore at Pignerol. This prisoner was treated with great distinction by the governor, and was seen by none but him and M. de Rosarges, major of the castle, who alone had care of him."

The existence, therefore, of this prisoner in the Bastille, his having been under the charge of St. Mars at Pignerol, his being treated with great distinction by the governor, his wearing a mask of black velvet, and his name, character, and crime in the eyes of the government being studiously concealed, itself was sent to Amelot, though the expressions are somewhat obscure concerning it.

cealed, are all proved beyond any doubt. That he was of a middle age, tall, handsome in person, of a brown complexion, and a musical voice; that he never complained of his captivity, and never spoke of his condition, are established by Voltaire, if not upon grounds as incontestable as the former facts, yet upon authority equal to almost any that can be brought forward in support of any other historical point, and far superior to that upon which the great mass of history rests. Added to these facts are the accounts of the last illness, death, and interment of the famous Man in the Iron Mask, which are also furnished upon indisputable authority, that of the journal of Dujonca. We shall give the extract as we find it.

“Monday, 19th November, 1703. The unknown prisoner, always masked with a mask of black velvet, whom M. de St. Mars brought with him coming from the island of St. Marguerite, and whom he had long had under his charge, having found himself a little worse yesterday coming from mass, died to-day about 10 o'clock in the evening, without having had a great illness; there could scarcely have been less. M. Girault, our almoner, confessed him yesterday; surprised by death he could not receive the sacrament, and our almoner exhorted

* Another copy of this leaf of the Great Register has been given by a subsequent writer; but it contains various passages, evidently taken from other sources, perhaps by Chevalier himself, but clearly not forming part of the Great Register, and not sent by him to Amelot as such.

him a moment before he died. He was interred on Tuesday 20th November, at four o'clock in the afternoon, at the cemetery of St. Paul, our parish. "His interment cost forty livres."

The register of his interment in the church of St. Paul is as follows: "In the year 1703, 19th November, Marchialy, aged forty-five years, or thereabouts, died at the Bastille, whose body was buried in the cemetery of this parish, on the 20th of the said month, in presence of M. Rosarges, major of the Bastille, and of M. Reilh, surgeon-major of the Bastille, who have signed."

The sheet of the register copied by Chevalier, in some observations probably of his own, announces the same event in nearly the same words as the journal of Dujoncea, but adds the fact, that the whole furniture of the prisoner's room was burned; bed, bedding, tables, chairs, and every other article that the chamber contained were reduced to powder and cast into the sewer. The doors and windows were likewise burned, and the plastering of the room, both on the walls and ceiling, was beaten down and replaced.

Such, I believe, are the only historical facts absolutely proved to refer to the Man in the Iron Mask, though there have been many more particulars circulated concerning him, which may be divided into two grand classes, namely, in the first place well-authenticated facts, which may have reference to him or to some other of the many state prisoners

of that day, as the letters of various ministers, &c. wherein neither name nor direct indication of the prisoner is to be found; and in the second place, anecdotes and tales of more or less credibility, with which, however, we shall have as little to do as possible.

In regard to the letters and other public documents which have been brought to bear upon this question, we shall examine into the authenticity and application of them in investigating the various systems which have been proposed for the solution of the mystery of the Man in the Iron Mask. Six persons have been selected from amongst those who figured in the days of Louis XIV. by the various writers who have inquired into the subject, and each has been represented with confidence as the individual who terminated his life under such mysterious circumstances. These were,

The Count of Vermandois, natural son of Louis XIV. by Mademoiselle de la Vallière.

An elder, a twin, or a younger brother of Louis XIV. himself.

The well-known Duke of Beaufort, celebrated in the wars of the Fronde.

Arwedicks, the Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople.

The celebrated financier Fouquet, and Hercules Anthony Mathioli, secretary of the Duke of Mantua.

The first named of these, the Count of Vermandois, was also the first person on whom public

rumour fixed as the celebrated Man in the Iron Mask, and this supposition was put forth even before the account given by Voltaire in the *Siecle de Louis XIV.* It is upon him evidently that the author of the apocryphal memoirs regarding the History of Persia wishes to draw the attention of the world; and various curious particulars regarding his life and death, gave some degree of probability to the supposition.

Louis of Bourbon, Count of Vermandois, was born on the 2nd of October 1667. He was brought up with care, resembled greatly his mother, and was much loved by Louis XIV. himself. There is reason to believe, however, that he had been led into debauchery and vice, and we have the word of Mademoiselle de Montpensier for the fact of his having given his mother very great pain, and having been forbidden to appear before the King towards the middle of the year 1683. After having been severely reprimanded, both by his mother and the King, and having seen the consequences likely to ensue from the course he was pursuing, he completely changed his conduct, assuming a regular course of life, and never going out but to church or to the academy. The King became convinced that he had cast off the evil habits he had acquired, permitted him to reappear at the court, and sent him to the army then in the neighbourhood of Courtray. He was there, however, seized with a

malignant fever of which he died, after an illness of seven days, on the 19th of November 1683.

The fictitious history in which an attempt is made to identify this unfortunate prince with the Man in the Iron Mask, would persuade the reader that he, at the age of sixteen, had struck the Dauphin, who was in his twenty-second year, and in consequence of this aggravation of his previous bad conduct, had been condemned by his father to perpetual imprisonment under an iron mask. If the glaring improbability of this whole history were not sufficient of itself to satisfy the mind of any one in regard to its falsity, there are quite sufficient facts, established upon undoubted authority, to render it unworthy of any consideration. It was, nevertheless, supported strongly by Father Griffet, who was himself confessor of the Bastille, and who asserted that the blow given by the Count to the Dauphin occurred in a tent before Courtray. This assertion, however, is at once overthrown by the simple fact, which is established beyond all doubt, that the Dauphin himself was never before Courtray at all. Nor does it appear, although Mademoiselle de Montpensier mentions as a report, that the Count had fallen ill from drinking too much brandy, that he had in any respect returned to the evil habits into which he had been led as a boy. On the contrary, it is proved by a letter from Madame d'Osembrai, that he was excessively regretted by

the King and the whole court. She speaks of him in the highest terms, and declares that a marriage between him and Mademoiselle de Bourbon had been determined on at the time of his death. It may be sufficient to add, that had such an occurrence taken place as the reported blow given by the Count to his brother, the whole court would have rung with it at the time, whereas not one word respecting such an event is to be found in any contemporary writer.

In regard to the second person whom authors have pretended to discover under the mask of the prisoner, much greater difficulties occur in grappling with the subject, inasmuch as we have to combat a phantom, which takes whatever form those who conjure it up choose to give it. The very person himself is suppositious, and we are sometimes told that he was the son of Anne of Austria, by the Duke of Buckingham; sometimes the twin-brother of Louis XIV; sometimes a younger brother, in consequence of a criminal intercourse between her and Mazarin.

With regard to the child of Anne of Austria by the Duke of Buckingham, it is only necessary to remark, that the death of Buckingham took place in the year 1628, which would have made such a child nearly ten years older than Louis XIV. himself, which is irreconcilable with the description of the prisoner and the period of his death. Another adulterous child is attributed to her in one

of the notes upon an edition of Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary, published in 1770, which note is generally supposed to have been written by Voltaire himself. In this note the son is also supposed to be older than Louis XIV. A third son is supposed to have been the result of Anne of Austria's fondness for Mazarin; and if such a personage ever existed, the theory which declares him to have been concealed under the iron mask would appear to have much greater probability than either of those which have gone before. Nor can there any doubt exist that during the whole time of the ministry of Mazarin himself the opponents of the court lost no opportunity of insinuating that the Queen lived with the cardinal in a state of criminal intercourse.

The legitimacy of Louis XIV. himself even was called in question, and in a quatrain, said to have been placed under the napkin of the monarch at dinner, we find the suspicion directly stated.

Piller la veuve et l'orphelin,
Faire la guerre sans se battre;
C'est être fils de Mazarin,
Et non pas petit-fils d'Henri IV.

It is sufficient, however, on this subject, after the view we have taken of the character of Anne of Austria in a preceding part of this work, to recal the simple fact proved by Brienne and others, that Mazarin held by no means that station at the court of France at the time of the birth of Louis XIV.

which the satirist supposed, and that till a short time before the death of Louis XIII. Anne of Austria looked upon him as a personal enemy. Her after-conduct we find was certainly doubtful, even to her friends, but there is not the slightest proof whatsoever that she ever had a son by her minister; and if she had, as he could have put forth no claim whatsoever to the throne of France, there was no reasonable motive for the cruelty with which he was supposed to be treated by Louis. A system so totally destitute of all foundation, requires but very little refutation.

The next person whom we shall notice is the Duke of Beaufort, whose only claim to the renown of the masked prisoner is founded on the fact, that his body was never found after his death in Candia. He had, indeed, given offence to the King by his conduct while exercising the office of grand master of the marine. He had quarrelled with Colbert, and Louis had several times remonstrated with him in severe terms upon his conduct.

The Duke of Navailles, who was present at the siege, gives a brief account of Beaufort having been worsted in a skirmish with the Turks, and adds, "It has never been known since what became of him." Reports were current at the time that he was not dead, that he was a prisoner in Turkey, and that he would return; but nevertheless, the court of Paris, the Venetian Republic, and the Apostolic See, each of which were interested in

the fate of a French prince combating gallantly against the Infidels, looked upon his death as an undoubted fact, and instituted funeral services in his honour. The supposition, indeed, is totally without probability, that Louis, who, since the Duke's departure for Candia under his own orders, had received no new cause of offence whatsoever, should cause a man to be arrested and imprisoned for ever under an iron mask, to whom he intrusted a few months before the command of his fleet, and the direction of a great expedition. There is, however, another objection, which may be looked upon as conclusive. The Duke of Beaufort was born in the year 1616, and consequently, at the time of his death in 1669, was fifty-three years of age.

At the time of the death of the masked prisoner in 1703, Beaufort, had he lived, would have been between eighty-seven and eighty-eight. Now the account of an eye-witness depicts the masked prisoner as much less than that age. The physician or apothecary of the Bastille to whom Voltaire refers, and to whose son-in-law, then still living, he appealed to bear out his testimony, represented the Man in the Iron Mask as about sixty a few days before his death, and speaks of him in such terms throughout as to leave no earthly doubt that he was in full vigour both of mind and body previous to the last illness, which carried him rapidly to the grave. Nor does the tone of surprise in which the

authentic journal of Dujonca notices his sudden dissolution, at all accord with the supposition that the masked prisoner was a man of eighty-seven years of age, whose death might naturally be expected every day. It is evident, in short, that the supposition which identifies the Duke of Beaufort with the Man in the Iron Mask, is nothing but a resource afforded by imagination to baffled curiosity.

We may as well notice incidentally hypotheses which have been put forward regarding two other persons, Henry Cromwell, and the Duke of Monmouth. In regard to the first there is not the slightest proof whatever of any connexion between him and the masked prisoner. There may be some degree of mystery attached to his fate and history; but it by no means follows that every person in Europe, the end of whose life is unknown, was the celebrated prisoner of the Bastille. In regard to the Duke of Monmouth there is also no proof of the fact, and sufficient proofs against it. The imaginary history of that unhappy person takes it for granted that one of the officers of his army, who bore a great resemblance to him, and was taken with him, consented to die in his place, and under his name, and that the gallant but unfortunate prince was made over to Louis XIV. to suffer worse than death in the Bastille.

It is sufficient, however, to recall the journal of Dujonca, and the other evidence which proves that the Man in the Iron Mask was under the charge of

St. Mars at Pignerol. Now the execution of the Duke of Monmouth took place in 1685, at St. Mars quitted Pignerol in the year 1681.

Having now considered as much as seems necessary the hypotheses which seek to identify the masked prisoner either with persons who are not proved to have been imprisoned at all by Louis XIV, or with persons who are not proved ever to have had any existence on this earth, we shall turn to the cases which have a greater degree of probability attached to them, inasmuch as the personages to which they refer were not only real beings of flesh and blood, but are proved to have been victims to the iniquitous despotism of the French monarch.

In the first place appears Arwedicks, Awediks, or Avediks, once an Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople, who vigorously and strenuously opposed the proceedings of the Jesuits in their attempts to bring in the whole Armenian people into the bosom of the Roman Catholic church. He is even represented as having persecuted cruelly the Armenian Catholics. The latter, aided and instigated by the Jesuits, obtained by means of bribery an order for the exile of Arwedicks from Constantinople. Upon the road they bribed the chiaoux who had him in charge, and by the means of M. de Bonnal, French Vice-consul at Chio, embarked him on board a French ship, which carried him first either to Mont St. Michael or to the islands of St. Marguerite.*

* This account is taken entirely from the memoirs of the

He was thence transferred to the Bastille, where he remained a prisoner in close concealment for several years. The Porte was soon made aware of the abduction of the Patriarch, and several of its officers were put to the torture, in order to discover what had become of him; but the French Vice-consul, notwithstanding the confessions which were thus extracted, lied with skill and determination, and the Grand Seignior, not being able to prove that the King of France had anything to do with the detention of his subject, was obliged to limit his efforts to vain remonstrances.

Arwedicks remained buried in profound oblivion at the Bastille, and so strict were the means of concealment thought necessary, that a room was fitted up in such a manner as to enable him to hear mass without being seen, and no person was permitted to attend upon him but the officer into whose charge he was first given. All these particulars correspond extremely well with the history of the Man in the Iron Mask; but unfortunately the dates differ.

The embassy of Monsieur de Feriol, during whose sojourn at Constantinople, and perhaps by whose connivance, Arwedicks was carried off, did not commence till 1699. The authentic documents preserved at the Bastille, amongst which the Armenian Patriarch is openly registered as one of the

Marquis de Bonnal, some manuscripts of which give Mont St. Michel, some the Isle St. Marguerite.

prisoners, prove that he was there after the year 1709. Now the Man in the Iron Mask was brought to the Bastille in 1698, and died in 1703. It is therefore impossible that Arwedicks could be that prisoner. There is also much reason to believe that he afterwards embraced the Catholic faith, and was set at liberty.

We have now to consider the two theories which have of late been more strongly supported, and have been investigated with a greater degree of critical skill than any of the others. The first of these which we shall speak of is by far the most probable in all its particulars: though it fails in absolute proof, and leaves one or two objections unanswered, of so strong a character as to make me reject it unhesitatingly as a solution of the mystery. I speak of that which attempts to prove that Hercules Anthony Mathioli, secretary of the Duke of Mantua, was the person concealed under the mask of the prisoner in the Bastille.

This system was first brought forward by the Baron de Heiss, who, however, did not produce sufficient proofs to gain much credit; Sénac de Meilhan took it up again at a later period, and added some new information; and, in 1800, Monsieur Roux Fazillac published an immense mass of secret correspondence, in regard to the real history of the unfortunate secretary of Mantua, Duke of Mantua.

This publication was followed by that of Monsieur Delort in 1825, which contained all that he

thought necessary to establish the identity of the two prisoners; which work was afterwards translated by the late lamented Lord Dover, who, with his usual care and wisdom, added everything that was valuable in the work of Roux Fazillac, together with important observations of his own. From his work we shall give a sketch of the history of Mathioli, as connected with that of Louis XIV, and shall then produce the objections of others to his system, investigating the reality of such objections, and adding some of our own.

Hercules Anthony Mathioli was born of a noble family at Bologna in 1640. He studied and obtained some distinction at the University of that place, married early, and had two sons. Entering into the service of Charles III, Duke of Mantua, he was made Secretary of State, and was afterwards named Supernumerary Senator of Mantua by Charles IV, who added thereto the title of Count.

He had ceased to be Secretary of State prior to the year 1677, probably deprived of his post by the Duchess Dowager, Isabella Clara, and the partisans of the house of Austria, who held the weak prince, Charles IV, in a state of undignified tutelage.

The French had, in 1632, obtained by various corrupt means possession of the strong post of Pignerol, which gave them the key of all Piedmont, and they looked with a longing eye upon Casal, the capital of the Val d'Aoste, some of the Isère, some the Isère St. A. A

put into their hands the key of all Lombardy, and of the Milanese.

Casal, however, was in the hands of the Duke of Mantua; his mother was an Austrian Princess; the Milanese was a territory belonging to her own house, and she was much more inclined to introduce a Spanish than a French garrison into the capital of the Montferrat.

In the year 1677, when Louis' schemes of conquest were opening on every side with the greedy appetite of fresh ambition, the French ambassador at Venice was the Abbé D'Estrades, son of the Count D'Estrades, that famous negotiator and skilful general, whose services to the crown of France we have had to notice more than once.

This Abbé D'Estrades, an unscrupulous personage, seems to have been inspired with a sort of deputy ambition, which even outran that of his master; and having some reason to believe that Mathioli was discontented with the Austrian policy of his Sovereign's mother, he commenced negotiations with the Mantuan Count, even without the approbation of Louis himself. He found Mathioli at first very willing to second his views upon Casal, and to take advantage of the power of France, in order to free his master from the subjection in which he was held by the Duchess Isabella. The Duke of Mantua, himself, also entered readily into arrangements with D'Estrades; and putting himself entirely in the hands of Ma-

thioli, he demanded, in return for suffering a French garrison to enter Casal, to be appointed generalissimo of any army sent from France to Italy, a sum of money, and some other minor advantages. The transaction was kept in the most profound secrecy, and the Duke of Mantua promised to meet D'Estrades during the carnival at Venice, when they could confer on their farther proceedings under cover of the masks, worn at that season by all.

So eager was Mathioli to hurry on his master to the completion of this business, that he wrote himself to Louis, with offers the nature of which could scarcely be doubtful, in regard to attaching his master fully to the French interests.

Louis, though willingly seconding the efforts of his negotiator, but not proceeding so impetuously as the other party, refused to give more than one hundred thousand crowns to the Duke of Mantua, and extended nothing but vague promises of protection and indemnity to quiet his fears regarding an attack upon his dominions by the Austrians, in consequence of his treaty with France. The Duke of Mantua, however, threw no difficulties in the way, but met D'Estrades in disguise at Venice, and declared his intention of sending Mathioli to France, in order to carry the negotiation to a conclusion with the French ministers.

D'Estrades, on his part, was anxious to prevent the journey of Mathioli, and here break forth that

deceit and treachery on the part of Louis and his agents, which but too much characterized many of the French transactions at that time. Louis instructed his agent to do all that he could to make the Duke of Mantua believe that a French army would pass the Alps to his support that very year, when the monarch knew that it was impossible for him to despatch one.

D'Estrades, aware of the same fact, laboured by every underhand means to delay the journey of Mathioli to Paris, and besought the French ministers, when he did arrive, to detain him there as long as possible, in order to conceal the truth from the Duke of Mantua. Thus, let it be remarked, the first act of treachery and deceit took place on the part of Louis XIV. himself; for there can be no doubt that the Duke of Mantua and his favourite were at that time perfectly sincere in their proposals to the court of France.

Circumstances favoured the views of D'Estrades. Mathioli did not set out till the end of the year, so that Louis' incapacity to fulfil his promises was, to all appearance, effectually concealed. Mathioli was received with great distinction by the French ministers and the King; presents and promises were showered upon him; a treaty was agreed upon between him and the court of France, and he was sent back to Italy to obtain the ratification thereof from his master.

In the mean while, the French government, fully

convinced that no difficulty would intervene, made preparations for taking possession of Casal, assembled troops on the Italian frontier, and appointed generals to carry the plan into execution. Now, however, delays commenced on the part of Mathioli, and it is very evident that, from the very moment of his return to Italy, he had determined either to wring something more from the French by procrastination, or to disappoint them altogether.

What was the cause of this sudden change is difficult to ascertain; whether Mathioli's visit to Paris had given him an insight of the French policy, and he had become convinced that the design of Louis was solely to obtain Casal, and then to leave his master to his fate; whether he fancied that the power of the French King was not sufficient to protect the Duke of Mantua against the resentment of the house of Austria; or whether, on the other hand, he had received a larger bribe from the Spaniards than from the French, may perhaps never be ascertained.

Certain it is, however, that in various matters Mathioli failed in executing his promises. He engaged that the Duke of Mantua should meet the French agent, Baron D'Asfeld, at Casal; but a thousand excuses were daily made to delay the interview. He promised next to meet Asfeld himself, at the village of Inerea, on the 9th of March, and that the Duke of Mantua should put

the French in possession of Casal on the 18th of that month.

But Asfeld was arrested at Cannonica, by order of Count Melgar, the Spanish governor of Milan, on his way to the place of rendezvous, and at the same time information was conveyed to the French court, which showed that the whole transactions between Mantua and France were publicly known in the north of Italy, which scarcely could have happened except by the treachery of Mathioli. Still, however, as the good faith of the Duke of Mantua was not doubted, the negotiations were continued, and some menacing intimations that his treachery had been discovered were given to Mathioli, mixed with hopes and promises to lead him back to fidelity. The famous Catinat, who was lying in concealment at Pignerol, was appointed to meet Mathioli in the place of Asfeld ; but the Italian Count never appeared at the rendezvous, and Catinat, hearing that he was himself likely to be arrested, made the best of his way back to Pignerol.

In the mean while the agents of Louis in the north of Italy had received full confirmation of their suspicions regarding Mathioli. The whole transactions between France and Mantua had evidently been made known to the Spanish authorities in the Milanese. It was proved that the Duke of Mantua's favourite had spent several days secretly at Milan, and, in fact, the fullest evidence was obtained of his treachery in the latter part of the

business. To punish him for this conduct, but still more, it would appear, to remove him from the Duke of Mantua, and to obtain possession of all the treaties and papers connected with the negotiation, Louis determined to arrest Mathioli and confine him secretly at Pignerol. The Count was accordingly induced to meet D'Estrades at Turin, and that wily diplomatist persuaded him, on his complaining of want of money for various purposes connected with the negotiation, that if he would go to hold a personal interview with Catinat on the frontier, that officer would furnish him with all the sums of money he required. D'Estrades assigned as a reason for the meeting taking place near the frontier, that the French commander could not leave his troops, which were in the neighbourhood of Pignerol, and Mathioli falling into the snare, agreed to accompany the Abbé to the place of rendezvous.

On the day appointed Mathioli, D'Estrades, and the Abbé de Montesquieu, set out from Turin and rode towards Pignerol. Shortly before arriving at the place of rendezvous they were stopped by a broken bridge, which Mathioli assisted to repair with his own hands. They then proceeded on foot, and found Catinat waiting for them, accompanied by two officers and four soldiers of the garrison of Pignerol. A conversation ensued between Catinat and Mathioli, in the course of which the latter made a full confession in regard

to the place where the papers concerning the negotiation were concealed. He was then informed by Catinat that he was a prisoner, and making no resistance whatsoever, he was conveyed to Pignerol, where he arrived late at night, and was placed under the charge of St. Mars.

No one concerned in the arrest of Mathioli, but D'Estrades, Catinat, and Montesquieu, were at all aware of who was the person thus made prisoner, and he immediately received one of those prison names which were common in the reign of Louis XIV. being called thenceforward the *Sieur de Lestang*. Nevertheless it is clear that his arrest and imprisonment at Pignerol were not only known to all the French agents in the north of Italy, but to a great number of other persons in Venice, Turin, Milan, &c.

Mathioli was now subjected to various examinations, in which all the particulars of his perfidious conduct were brought to light. But it is clear, from the whole correspondence of Catinat and Pomponne, that the object of Louis and his ministers was by no means so much to punish Mathioli as to obtain possession of the treaties with the Duke of Mantua, and, if possible, still to gain an entrance into Casal. Whether the French government succeeded fully in the former object does not appear: in the latter object they failed for the time, but succeeded eventually in the year 1681.

Catinat was soon after recalled to the court of

France, and Mathioli remained a prisoner in the hands of St. Mars. The same precautions, though not to the same extent as those which had been taken with regard to Fouquet and Lauzun, were now applied to him : but whereas the French ministers had always shown great respect, and enjoined the same upon St. Mars, towards the two former prisoners, they now spoke of Mathioli with the most sovereign contempt, and enjoined harshness and severity towards him upon the governor of the prison at Pignerol.

“ It is not the intention of the King,” says Louvois in one of his letters, “ that the *Sieur de Lestang* should be well treated, nor that, except the absolute necessities of life, you should give him anything that may make him pass his time agreeably.” Again, he says, “ I have nothing to add to what I have already commanded you respecting the severity with which the individual *Lestang* must be treated.” He repeats his injunctions in another letter, adding, that he is not to be allowed to see a physician, “ unless you know he is in absolute want of one.”

In 1686 Mathioli went raving mad, of which St. Mars, in his letters to Louvois, gives several proofs ; and in July of that year, Louvois writes to the governor, “ With regard to the *Sieur de Lestang* I wonder at your patience, and that you wait for an order to treat such a rascal as he deserves

when he is wanting in respect to you." In the month of September 1680, after some correspondence between St. Mars and Louvois upon the subject, Mathioli, in order to save the trouble and expense of having two priests, was placed in the same room with a mad Jacobine monk, and a lamentable picture is given by the governor of the miserable state of these two wretched madmen, as he and his officers had seen them through a hole over the door. In these last letters it is to be remarked that the name Lestang is dropped, and Mathioli resumed, as also in Louvois' replies to him. It will be remembered also that the secret, if it could be so called, of Mathioli's arrest and imprisonment, besides being known to all the principal French agents in the north of Italy, was fully known to a petty news writer of the name of Guiliani.

In the year 1681, St. Mars was appointed to the government of the fort at Exiles, and particular directions were given him for the removal of two prisoners "lodged in the bottom of the tower" of Pignerol. All the writers who have attempted to identify Mathioli with the Man in the Iron Mask take it for granted that the former was one of these two prisoners. Such a fact, however, is not only not proved, but there is every reason to believe that it was not the case, as the following considerations will show.

In the letter of Louvois, to which we have alluded,* containing directions for the removal of the prisoners, Mathioli's name is also mentioned in reference to his effects in possession of St. Mars, which the French minister orders the governor to carry with him to Exiles, in order to be given back to him if the King should ever order him to be set at liberty. Now if Mathioli had been one of the two prisoners conveyed with such care to Exiles, it is but natural to suppose that Louvois would not have given such an unnecessary order as to take his effects with him, when those effects we find consisted of no more than he had borne on his own person. Nor does Louvois, in the slightest degree, connect the name of Mathioli with those of the two prisoners of whom he speaks throughout the same letter.

A few days after,† St. Mars was suddenly ordered to suspend his journey to Exiles, in order to receive Catinat at Pignerol, who was sent for the purpose of concluding a new arrangement in order to obtain possession of Casal. The arrangement was fully concluded, Casal was given up to France, and from that moment the name of Mathioli never once occurs, nor is the slightest reference to him whatsoever to be found in the whole correspondence of St. Mars and the ministers. Two prisoners are constantly spoken of, the two who had been confined in the lower part of the donjon of Pignerol;

* 9th June 1681.

† 13th August 1681.

but there is not the slightest shadow of a proof whatsoever that either of these prisoners was Mathioli. His name, so frequently and so openly mentioned in the whole correspondence preceding, never occurs again, nor is the name of Lestang mentioned, while it is clearly pointed out that several other prisoners were left behind at Pignerol, and some indication exists of others, besides the two prisoners in the lower part of the donjon, having been taken to Exiles. The only words which could lead one to suppose that Mathioli was one of these two prisoners, are to be found in a former letter of St. Mars, in which he notifies that he had placed Mathioli with the mad Jacobin monk who was in the lower part of the tower. But in order to draw justly any such conclusion from this fact, as we find has been drawn, it would be necessary to prove that there were no prisoners of greater importance in the lower part of the tower than a mad monk and an Italian adventurer; and also that the chambers of the prisoners, which were frequently changed, as we find in the case of Fouquet, Lauzun, and Dubreuil, had not been changed between the 7th of September 1680 and the 12th of May 1681.

But this is not all: in the first place we find that Lauzun himself was, at the time of the arrest of Mathioli, and when Louvois speaks of the prisoners in the lower part of the tower, one of those prisoners himself, his apartment having been under-

neath that of Fouquet on the lower story of the prison, and Louvois having positively refused to give him the apartment which Mademoiselle Fouquet inhabited, on account of the greater facility of communication with persons without. This is proved by all the correspondence between Louvois, St. Pouanges, and St. Mars, to be found in the archives of the French foreign office, and in itself shows that there were various prisoners in the lower part of the tower at the very time that Louvois was designating by that appellation two, who are distinguished throughout the whole correspondence from all the rest, without ever being named. In the second place, it is to be particularly remarked, that these prisoners in the lower part of the tower are distinctly mentioned by Louvois in July 10th, 1680, very nearly two months before Mathioli was placed with the Jacobin monk, which took place in the beginning of September in the same year.

These facts seem to me to show that there is not any proof whatsoever of Mathioli being one of the two prisoners alluded to ; and we must remark also, that there are gaps in the correspondence of several years at a time. But it will be necessary to take some notice of the course of reasoning by which Lord Dover arrives at the conclusion that Monsieur Delort had absolutely proved the identity of Mathioli with the masked prisoner.

In the first place, Lord Dover remarks that the

order for Mathioli's clothes, in regard to which Louvois says that they ought at least to last three or four years, and the treatment which St. Mars as well as his lieutenants showed him, threatening to cudgel him, &c. is a refutation "of the absurd stories" with regard to the fondness for rich lace shown by the Iron Mask, and of the respect with which he was treated by his gaolers. This is entirely begging the question. If it were clearly proved that Mathioli and the Iron Mask were one, such might be the induction; but when the identity of the two is the matter in dispute, the conduct of St. Mars and Louvois towards Mathioli, as shown by their correspondence, and the directly opposite conduct displayed towards the Iron Mask, as related to Voltaire by an eye-witness, (whose words he calls upon another living witness to attest,) confirmed in every respect by Griffet, the confessor of the Bastille, and Chevalier, the major of that prison, afford the strongest possible reason for supposing that Mathioli and the Man in the Iron Mask were two distinct persons.

In the next place, Lord Dover states that Louvois, in a letter dated May 12th, 1681, informs St. Mars that "the two prisoners in the lower part of the tower are the *only ones* of those under his care at Pignerol whom the King wishes to accompany him to Exiles."

Now I have examined the letter of Louvois with the utmost attention, and I find that Louvois says

merely that *he thinks they are the only ones*, but, at the same time, directs St. Mars to send him a list of all the others, with the causes of their detention, evidently with the purpose of deciding upon the above point at an after period; and even if they were the only ones, we have shown by the letter of the 10th of July, that he speaks of the prisoners in the lower part of the tower before the monk and Mathioli were placed together; and therefore Lord Dover's interpretation that the words, "the two prisoners in the lower part of the tower, signify, as we have before seen, Mathioli and the monk," is inaccurate.

In regard to the total cessation of the name of either Mathioli or Lestang, Lord Dover explains it by saying, it was in consequence of that part of Louvois' former letter of the 12th of May 1680, in which he says, "With regard to the two who are in the lower part of the tower, you need only designate them in that manner without adding anything else," and he conceives this to have been a precaution to prevent their imprisonment from becoming known if the correspondence should fall into the hands of any one else.

I agree entirely with this view as far as considering it a precaution of the kind named; but I look upon it as the most positive proof that we have yet arrived at, that Mathioli was neither of the two prisoners here referred to, as a month after Louvois had written that letter, he himself writes

down Mathioli's name at full, without even employing to designate him the fictitious name of Lestang.

There is another extraordinary discrepancy in regard to the supposition that Mathioli was one of these prisoners, which, to my mind, is perfectly convincing that the hypothesis is erroneous. The whole correspondence of Louvois and St. Mars show that both the governor and his lieutenants went in and out of the chamber of Mathioli, conversed with him, watched his proceedings when made through a hole above the door, and, in fact, were under no restrictions in regard to him, except inasmuch as his security was affected. But on the 20th of September 1681, Louvois formally notifies to St. Mars that he may from time to time visit the last prisoner committed to his charge after he shall have been removed to Exiles, and on the 20th of January 1687, St. Mars pledges himself to Louvois, that even his lieutenant never did nor ever could hold intercourse with the prisoner. Setting all these facts aside, the supporters of this theory are forced to believe that the mad Jacobin monk, who was so insane as to start up from his bed stark naked and preach by the hour to Mathioli at Pignerol, was the other prisoner who was conveyed from that fortress in a litter with close curtains surrounded by guards and attendants, and placed in a chamber with two sentinels watching it night and day, and with curtains so arranged as not to be seen even by the priest who performed mass before him.

These were extraordinary precautions in regard to a gentleman who only wanted a strait-waistcoat, and still more extraordinary are the precautions for concealing from the eyes of any one, two prisoners, whose faces, persons, and proceedings could be daily watched at Pignerol, by St. Mars and his lieutenants, (the word is in the plural number,) by a hole over the door, and with whom those officers had been in daily communication by word of mouth. Setting aside these particulars, the work of Lord Dover is clear, well arranged, and throws great light upon the history of that time; but it does not in the slightest degree prove the identity of the Man in the Iron Mask with Mathioli, any more than with any other of the prisoners who were at Pignerol during the time of the government of St. Mars. It would not in the slightest degree surprise me to find it proved hereafter, that Mathioli had been liberated in 1681, after Casal had been given up to the King of France by the Duke of Mantua. I do not mean to say that such was the case, for I have no proof of it whatsoever; and Monsieur Dutens asserts, upon very good authority, that the Mantuan Secretary died still a prisoner, about nine years after his arrest.*

* It is a curious fact that a personage of the name of Lestang was conveyed to the Bastille in 1690, which is proved by the Great Register of that prison; but notwithstanding the similarity of the name, I do not conceive that there was any connexion between him and Mathioli.

One thing, however, is evident from a comparison of the letters of the ministers and St. Mars in regard to Fouquet, Lauzun, Mathioli, and other prisoners, who were all at Pignerol at the same time, that, as far as possible, the official correspondence regarding the different prisoners was kept separate, and that more than one of these strains of correspondence was going on at once between the same functionaries, but each referring only to one prisoner, or one class of prisoners; so that if any of the letters fell into the hands of strangers, no information would have got abroad regarding any but the prisoner in question. To illustrate what I mean, I may add, that though Fouquet and Lauzun were at Pignerol nearly a year with Mathioli, in no part of St. Mars' correspondence with Louvois regarding them is one word said in reference to the latter, and in all the letters which have been published respecting Mathioli, nothing is said respecting Fouquet and Lauzun.*

* It has been supposed, or rather assumed, in order to strengthen the theory in regard to the identity of Mathioli and the Iron Mask, that Louis' object in this extraordinary careful concealment of his person was to hide from the Duke of Mantua the violation of the rights of nations in the person of his ambassador. It is scarcely possible to conceive, however, that the Duke of Mantua was ignorant of the arrest of his favourite minister. For not only was the fact perfectly known to all the French envoys in the north of Italy, to D'Estrades, to Montesquieu, to Pinchesne, to Varengeville, and many others; but also, as we have shown, to Giuliani, a petty newsmonger, whose services to France are not considered as

We now come to the consideration of another theory, which has of late been supported by a gentleman of no insignificant talents and considerable erudition, who thinks fit to conceal his real name under that of Paul Jacob. This gentleman maintains most strenuously that the Man in the Iron Mask and the unfortunate Fouquet were one, and collecting all the traditions regarding the Man in the Iron Mask, and all the rumours regarding the death of Fouquet, he shows himself inclined to receive them as true where they support his theory; rejects them where they militate against it. He also makes several mistakes, such as we have pointed out in regard to Mademoiselle de Montalais, and in one or two instances puts a different construction upon certain passages of documents which he cites, from that which it appears to me they can by any means

worth more than forty or fifty pistoles a year. It was also apparently known to the Duchess of Savoy and her ministers; and in order to get at the papers concerning the cession of Casal, Catinat caused Mathioli to write with his own hand three letters to his father, who was at Padua, one of which acquainted him with the real state and condition in which he was, and informed him that it was important, as well for the life as the honour of his son, that the papers should be given to the very Giuliani we mention, who was instructed to go to Padua to seek them. It is scarcely possible to conceive, that under such circumstances the matter should not almost immediately reach the ears of the Duke of Mantua, and utterly impossible that he should long remain ignorant of a fact which became so notorious that the whole particulars of the arrest of Mathioli, with a few unimportant deviations, were published in a historical journal of Leyden in August 1687.

bear. At the same time that I express this opinion, I most willingly admit that in his work on the Iron Mask he has brought forward a number of very interesting historical facts, not generally known before the publication of his book, which must tend to add considerably to a well-earned reputation.

I shall now proceed to examine his theory, taking as the basis of argument those points regarding the Man in the Iron Mask, which, in the first part of this chapter, I have offered reasons for admitting; and adding thereunto a letter, and a part of a letter, which he cites, and which I have not made use of before, because the authenticity thereof is not to my mind clearly established; but of which, as there is great probability in their favour, he may fairly have the advantage.

The first of these documents is a letter originally published in the Memoirs on the Bastille, which we have so often mentioned, purporting to be from Barbezieux to St. Mars, dated August 13, 1691. The editor of that work makes no mention whatsoever of where that letter is to be found; but, he is in general so extremely accurate, that there is a strong probability it is authentic. It is to the following effect: "Your letter of the 26th of last month has been given to me. When you shall have anything to tell me of the prisoner who has been under your charge for twenty years, I beg of you to use the same precautions that you did when you wrote to Monsieur de Louvois."

The other is part of a letter from Barbezieux to St. Mars, dated Nov. 17, 1697, cited by Monsieur Weiss, who does not mention where it is to be found, but whose accuracy is so well known as to leave scarcely a doubt that he himself had verified it. The only words which he gives are these: "Without explaining to any one what your ancient prisoner has done."

In regard to these two letters, before we go farther, it may be remarked that no proof whatsoever exists, but by remote induction, that the words used were applied to the Man in the Iron Mask. We will take it for granted, however, that they were so, and now endeavour to give the principal heads of the theory regarding Fouquet and the arguments by which it is supported, together with some observations thereupon.

The history of the arrest and detention of Fouquet, at Pignerol, has been already fully given, and the first position of M. Paul Jacob is, that Fouquet did not die in the year 1680, as has been generally reported. His next assertion is, that instead of dying, he was shut up in stricter imprisonment than ever; the report of his death industriously spread abroad, his face covered with a velvet mask, and he himself carried from Pignerol to Exiles, from Exiles to the isle St. Marguerite, and from the isle St. Marguerite to the Bastille, where he died late in 1703, under the name of the Man in the Iron Mask. His last effort is to show that there was a

reasonable and sufficient motive (taking into consideration the character of Louis XIV.) to account for such conduct on the part of the King and his ministers.

In regard, then, to the first point, — whether Fouquet did or did not die in 1680, — the author brings forward a good many contradictory rumours current at the time, regarding the fate of the unfortunate superintendant. In the first place he urges that Fouquet did not then die, because Gourville mentions that Fouquet was set at liberty, and wrote to him to thank him for what he had done for his wife; because Fouquet's son, in 1682, published a new edition of some of his father's works, stated to be revised and augmented by the author; because Madame Fouquet presented certain petitions to the King in 1680; because a friend of Fouquet's family dedicated to Louis XIV, in 1683, an allegorical piece in justification of Fouquet; because the family of Fouquet itself were doubtful as to his fate; and because in papers found amongst the archives of the Bastille, various dates regarding the death of Fouquet, differing from those that are usually given, are placed as notes upon the registry of his captivity in that prison. To these facts are added various vague rumours in regard to Fouquet having died in the Cevennes, &c. &c. which are unworthy of consideration.

In the first place, then, with regard to the memoirs of Gourville, we must remark, that it is gene-

rally admitted that no reliance is to be placed upon his chronology; that he only mentions having received one letter from Fouquet after his imprisonment at Pignerol, and that it is proved by the correspondence of Louvois and St. Mars, published by Delort, that Fouquet was permitted to write to Gourville by St. Mars, in the year 1679, at a time when the superintendant was, comparatively speaking, at liberty, though still within the walls of the Bastille. It is probable that this letter referred to nothing but matters of business, and that Gourville, who was at the other end of France, and knew that his friend had not been permitted for years to write to any one, naturally concluded that he was at liberty.

In the next place it is proved that Fouquet's son, the Count de Vaux, was permitted to carry off the greater part of his father's papers, so that the publication of a work, attributed to Fouquet, and revised by the author, proves nothing in regard to the point in dispute.*

Respecting the petitions of Madame Fouquet there is not the slightest proof that they in any degree referred to her husband after 1680, except in justification of his character, and we find that she had business with all the ministers long after

* This work was "Les Conseils de la Sagesse," and though circulated under the name of Fouquet, we are positively informed by Bussy Rabutin, vol. ii. p. 42, that it was written by the Jesuit Boutauld.

Fouquet's death. The justification of Fouquet by Boutauld has surely nothing to do with the question, as it by no means proves that Fouquet was alive because a friend wished to defend his memory. As to the fact that his family did not know his fate, this is only asserted by Voltaire, who had it neither from his son, nor his daughter, nor his wife, but from his daughter-in-law.

In regard to the notes in the Bastille, which give various dates respecting his death; as they were written on a subject at that time not at all under the cognizance of the officers of the Bastille, and contain within themselves the proof of their having been added long after that part of the register was written to which they were affixed, and which related to the detention of Fouquet in that prison, in 1664, we can draw no deduction from them as historical documents.

On the other hand, in proof of the death of Fouquet in 1680, we have the authority of Bussy, Rabutin, vol. ii. p. 41; we have the authority of Madame de Sevigné; we have the authority of a number of other contemporary writers; and we have the authority, in the last place, of Louvois himself, in a private letter to St. Mars, which not only acknowledges the receipt of his official information of the death of Fouquet, but gives detailed directions in regard to what is to be done with his chamber; shows that his daughter, Mademoiselle Fouquet, had been furnished with a room commu-

nicating with that of her father ; that his son M. de Vaux was with him at his death ; and, in short, leaves no earthly doubt whatsoever, that he, Louvois, at least was as firmly convinced of the death of Fouquet as he was of his own existence.

But to support his first supposition, M. Paul Jacob is obliged to make another supposition, which is, that this letter of Louvois to St. Mars was altogether a piece of deceit, in order to cover ~~up~~ greater obscurity the real fate of Fouquet. The question, however, is, who was it to deceive ? Not certainly to deceive St. Mars, for he is acknowledged still to have had the prisoner under his charge ; and if it was not intended to deceive him, why was it addressed to him, unless ~~it~~ were true ? But still further, we must yet have more suppositions ; for not contented with writing to St. Mars on the subject, Louvois blames him for having suffered the Count de Vaux to carry off his dead father's papers ; and this must be supposed to be a part of the deceit also. Again, on the very day following, Louvois writes another letter to St. Mars, ordering him to give up the dead body of Fouquet to the widow, who was present at Pignerol at his death ; and we must suppose that this letter was another deceit, and that the dead body was fictitious also ; and in the two letters which follow in the same collection, we find the superintendent called the late M. Fouquet, which must also be considered as deceitful.

In opposition to the whole of these strong facts, which prove the death of Fouquet almost beyond doubt, the supporters of this theory have nothing to allege but the dates of some letters written by people in Paris about that time, which would seem to show that rumours of the death of Fouquet had been spread about Paris before the fact reached the knowledge of the minister. To this a reply is sorely wanting, as it is an occurrence which we see happen every day in regard to other people, that rumours of the death of individuals of less interest than Fouquet precede the event, and therefore it is not at all extraordinary that the same should have occurred in his case, as it was well known that his health had been failing for a long time, and his declining state was one of the chief motives for the mitigation of his imprisonment. We, therefore, cannot in the slightest degree admit that the dates of printed letters,* which we cannot compare with the originals, should, even for a moment, shake the testimony of the letters of Louvois, which may be authenticated by referring to the archives of France; nor, even supposing the dates exact, can we allow that vague rumours of the death of Fouquet having spread through Paris on the 25th of March, should prevent us from believing that he died at all.

One fact, however, of some importance, has been brought to light by this inquiry in regard to Fou-

* Nothing can in general be more uncertain.

quet's death. It has generally been believed, that the body of Fouquet was transported from Pignerol to Paris, and buried in the convent church of Sainte Marie, Rue St. Antoine; and this supposition is confirmed by the register of the Bastille, which bears,—in a passage which must have been added many years afterwards, for the year under which it is placed is 1663,—that Fouquet was buried, on the 20th of March 1681, in the place which we have mentioned. A note of the Major Chevalier's gives afterwards an extract from the registers of that church; but when applied to in 1790 for a confirmation of this extract, the superior of the convent declared that she could find no registers earlier than 1737, adding, that it was very probable that the registers spoken of were at the parish church of St. Paul, the curate of which performed all the interments of their convent. She also said, that she finds from different notes in the possession of the convent, that Fouquet died at Pignerol in the month of March 1680, and was buried in a vault in their church on the 28th of March 1681.

No epitaph of Fouquet, however, was to be found in the church, which struck M. Jacob as extraordinary; and on the occasion of the body of one of the Archbishops of Bourges being removed a short time ago from that church to his archbishopric, a commission from the city examined the coffins in the family vault of Fouquet, and none bearing his name or epitaph was to be found. Se-

veral of the members of his family were there, and several were wanting ; but his body, as far as could be discovered, was not amongst those in the vault. This is an extraordinary fact, but we cannot admit that it tends in the slightest degree to prove that Fouquet did not die at Pignerol in 1680, or that the whole correspondence of Louvois and St. Mars, in regard to his death, was carried on to deceive the postmen if ever the letters should fall into their hands, for that correspondence could have no other object whatsoever.

To conclude the catalogue of improbabilities which stand in the way of this theory, we need only point out that the imprisonment of Fouquet was gradually but completely relaxed during the four or five last years of his imprisonment ; that—instead of solitary confinement, with only a few books, without leave either to write or to receive tidings from without the walls, and without any communication except with his gaoler, his confessor, or his physician, and that upon a very narrow and limited scale,—he was step by step permitted to communicate by letter with his relations and his friends, to see them and strangers from time to time, to walk out in the citadel unaccompanied by even the governor, to have his daughter lodged in the apartment adjacent to his own, and to call his wife and son to Pignerol. All these facts are proved either up to the day of his death, or, according to the present hypothesis, up to the day

destined to see the commencement of a new state of captivity, the most extraordinary, if not the most rigorous, on record. That under such circumstances, with his wife and children around him, he himself almost at liberty, Madame Fouquet and the Count de Vaux visiting him every day, and his daughter residing constantly in a chamber communicating with his own, the King should think fit, without any new cause of animosity towards him, to have him plunged into a dungeon, to spread the report of his death, to cover his face with an eternal mask, to deliver a fictitious body to Madame Fouquet, to institute a deceitful correspondence with the governor of the prison for the chance of blinding the eyes of contemporaries or posterity, and should take the most rigorous means to shut out from all communication with his fellow men, a person whom he had permitted, for nearly a year and a half, to hold almost unlimited communication with a multitude of persons, is too monstrous a supposition for history to entertain it for a moment, unless some extraordinary motive could be shown totally out of the sphere of ordinary probabilities; and at the same time the most convincing proof of every fact would be required, before we could admit the strongest motive as even corroborative evidence of this strange and incredible event.

This brings us to the consideration of those two questions,—what are the proofs that Louis did commit the act—or, in other words, what are the proofs

of the identity of Fouquet and the Iron Mask ? and what are the motives assigned for so preposterous a proceeding ? Proofs there are none, motives are entirely hypothetical.

In regard to the proofs, then, of the identity of the two prisoners, the only reasons assigned for supposing that Fouquet and the Mask were one, are these ;— first, that there was a similarity between the precautionary means adopted to prevent the communication of the Man in the Mask with any person whatsoever, and those measures which were employed for the same purpose with regard to Fouquet during the first years of his imprisonment ;— secondly, that at the time of the taking of the Bastille by the populace, or shortly after, there was published in an anonymous journal circulated in Paris, and which dropped, I believe, within a month, an account of some anonymous person having found in some unknown part of the Bastille an anonymous card, inscribed with the words “ Fouquet, arrivant des îles Sainte Marguerite avec un masque de fer ;” followed by three exes — X. X. X., and underneath the word “ Kersadion,” together with the number 64,389,000 ;— and thirdly, that the letter of Barbezieux, which we have before cited, speaks, in addressing St. Mars, of the prisoner whom he had had under his charge for twenty years, which could not have been done with accuracy if, as the supporter of this theory asserts, there was no prisoner in the charge of St. Mars

in the year 1671, twenty years before the date of that letter, who could be at all confounded with the Iron Mask, except Fouquet. This is the only cogent argument in favour of the theory.

That the precautions which proved efficacious with regard to one prisoner should be employed towards another, for whose security and concealment there existed as great or greater motives, is so natural, that it cannot be considered as even in the slightest degree tending to establish the identity of Fouquet and the Iron Mask, even if it were proved that the precautions taken with respect to both were absolutely the same. The card said to be found in the Bastille we shall pass over as altogether unworthy of a single comment. On the letter of Barbezeix, however, and the inductions sought to be drawn from it, several observations are to be made.

In the first place, as to the construction of the words used, "depuis vingt ans,"—for twenty years (we speak with diffidence in opposition to Frenchmen regarding an expression in their own language), it would appear that these words must be taken as either absolutely fixing the exact date, or as giving only something near it, on either side more or less. We cannot admit that, according to that precision of language which was established at the period of Barbezieux, the words, "depuis vingt ans," would have been used to imply,

But Jacob has interpreted them, for twenty years or more than twenty years, in which case Barbezieux would have written "plus de vingt ans." The words were either to be taken as absolute and exact as twenty years, or as vague, implying about twenty years; and therefore, if applicable to Fouquet, who had been placed under the charge of St. Mars twenty-six years before, it might be rendered applicable to any other prisoner placed under his charge several years after 1671.

Even were our construction of the words wrong, it would be absolutely necessary to show that between the arrival of St. Mars at Pignerol in 1665, and the year 1671, there was no other prisoner under his charge who could in any degree be confounded with the Iron Mask, except Fouquet. This is indeed asserted, but without the slightest proof whatsoever. We have already shown, in the case of Fouquet, Lauzun, and Mathioli, that separate classes of correspondence were carried on between St. Mars and the ministers regarding separate classes of prisoners; and therefore, were there nothing in the published correspondence to show that there were other prisoners of importance under the care of St. Mars than Fouquet and Lauzun, it would by no means prove that such prisoners had not existed, nor that long and particular correspondence regarding them had not taken place. But we must contend that there is continual evidence throughout

the whole correspondence, that there were other prisoners of importance under the charge of St. Mars at the very period referred to.

In the year 1670, we find by a letter from Louvois to St. Mars, that a prisoner had been conducted to Pignerol by the Major of Dunkirk, who must have been of considerable importance to be placed under the charge of so high an officer. But besides any inductions regarding his importance, from the rank of the person who conducted him between eight and nine hundred miles, from one extremity of France to the other, there is in the letter of Louvois himself the strongest evidence that this was a prisoner of the very first importance, for the minister thus speaks, referring directly to this prisoner. "By this you will see that you have not taken sufficient precautions to prevent him from having any communication with any one, and as it is very important for the service of his Majesty that he should have none, I beg you to examine carefully the interior and the exterior of the place in which he is shut up, and to put it in such a state that the prisoner can neither see nor be seen by anybody, and that he cannot speak to any person whatsoever, nor hear those who can tell him anything."*

The date of this letter brings it close to the period to which that of Barbezieux refers, and it is perfectly clear that the prisoner herein spoken of

* Louvois à St. Mars, 26 Mars 1670.

is not a culprit of the name of Valcroissant, mentioned in two subsequent letters, who was condemned to the galleys at Marseilles and sent to that place from Pignerol; both because it is impossible to conceive that he should have been sent from Dunkirk to Pignerol, for the purpose of going to Marseilles, when half a dozen other prisons were in the direct way, and Pignerol was many hundred miles out of it; and also because the prisoner conducted by the Major of Dunkirk was evidently a person of much greater consequence than a person condemned for some pitiful offence to the galleys, a punishment which was never, at that period, inflicted except upon the low and degraded.

I do not by any means wish to assert that this prisoner was the Man in the Iron Mask. It might be or it might not, but at all events the facts I have stated show that there were more prisoners of importance at Pignerol than Fouquet, at the very time to which Barbesieux's letter refers, and it is also clearly proved, that on several occasions St. Mars having matters to communicate to the minister with reference to facts of which we have no knowledge, sent his Lieutenant, Blainvilliers, all the way from Pignerol to Paris, to communicate by word of mouth with Louvois, on the expressed motive that he was afraid to trust that which he had to say to a letter. One of these journeys took place at the very time that Fouquet was in full communication with all his friends and relations;

so that there is no reason whatsoever to believe that the intelligence conveyed by Blainvilliers referred to him.

Setting all this aside, however, there is one consideration still more important in regard to Barbèsieux's letter, which is this: there is no proof whatsoever that it referred to the Man in the Iron Mask at all. The minister speaks of a prisoner who had been under the charge of St. Mars for twenty years, but that is all that we know upon the subject. Two prisoners were carried from Pignerol to Exiles, and this letter might refer to either of them, or to any other who was removed at the same time or afterwards. It might refer to the prisoner named Dubreuil: it might refer to another prisoner who was confined with him, with so much mystery that, even in answer to a question from Louvois, St. Mars avoids mentioning his name directly.

The train of reasoning fails altogether in showing any just cause for believing that Fouquet, whether he died in 1680 or not, was the same as the Man in the Iron Mask; and even before we entertain a suspicion that such was the case, we should require, as we said before, the most clear and distinct account of a just and reasonable motive for the extraordinary conduct attributed to Louis XIV. in the present effort to prove the identity of the two prisoners;—a just and reasonable motive, if such can be assigned, why Louis XIV.

should gradually for a period of several years relax the state of imprisonment to which he had subjected Fouquet, till at length the superintendent was at liberty in almost all but the name, and then should suddenly seize upon him in so dexterous a manner as to make his wife and son, who were daily visiting him, fully believe he was dead,—so dexterous as to prevent his daughter, who inhabited a neighbouring chamber communicating with that of her father, from knowing that his death had not taken place, and to keep the facts from the knowledge of the very officers who were daily in the habit of seeing the prisoner;—a just and reasonable motive, in short, for spreading a report of Fouquet's death; for presenting his widow with some unexplained thing, said to be the corpse of Fouquet, but which was not his corpse; for making Louvois write a number of private letters to St. Mars relative to the death of Fouquet, whom they all three knew not to be dead; for covering the unhappy superintendent's face with a mask, and burying him, at the age of more than eighty-eight, under the name of Marchialy.

A motive has been assigned, but in no degree sufficient to account for such a proceeding. Neither, when the dates and circumstances come to be closely examined, will it be found in any respect applicable to the circumstances on which it is brought to bear. For the purpose of finding such a motive, the supporters of this theory revived all

the defunct scandals of the early part of Louis' reign; but we must give an epitome of the reasonings they use. They represent that Fouquet's real offence in the eyes of Louis XIV, the offence for which he was originally punished, was having presumed to make proposals to Mademoiselle de la Vallière of the same criminal nature with those of Louis XIV. himself. There is even an insinuation extant that the superintendent had dared to raise his eyes to the Queen herself. These they assert were the causes of the King's virulence against him at the time of his trial and first imprisonment. On those subjects, however, they seem to think that the enmity of Louis XIV. had declined as his love for one of the persons whom Fouquet had sought to corrupt wore away by gratification. When too, after undergoing several intermediate passions for Madame de Montespan, Madame de Soubise, Mademoiselle de Fontange, &c., the King was smitten with the somewhat autumnal charms of Madame de Maintenon, and found that the lady had not only been also an object of Fouquet's solicitations, but had yielded to them, the wrath of the monarch, we are told, was again aroused, and he suddenly plunged the unhappy superintendent into a new and more frightful state of imprisonment, and sent him down to posterity as the Man in the Iron Mask.

Such is the reasoning by which it is attempted to show that there was a reasonable motive for the King's supposed conduct towards Fouquet, and in

support of these points are brought forward the first unfavourable reports regarding Madame de Maintenon, which we have noticed already; a letter without date or name, said to be found amongst the papers of Fouquet, and attributed to her, not only without any proof, but with the strongest presumption from its whole style of composition, that it was not hers; another letter, equally inadmissible, and several letters of Madame de Maintenon about the time of her great rise in the King's favour, which show that her enemies were busily circulating all sorts of scandals and tales regarding her early life, in order to injure her with the King.* It is argued, that it was these tales

* We pass over all the letters and papers cited by M. Jacob in order to prove that Fouquet did attempt to seduce Mademoiselle de la Vallière, and to show that he was accused of raising his eyes to the Queen, as bearing in no degree upon the point in question. Even these, however, require some observation in this note, as, in the first place, the author supposes, without any proof whatsoever, that a letter found in the pocket of Fouquet was addressed to Mademoiselle de la Vallière, when all contemporaries declare it was addressed to Mademoiselle de Montalais, solely upon the strength of these words contained in it: "*Vous m'avez causé aujourd'hui mille distractions, en parlant au Roi; mais je me soucie fort peu de ses affaires;*" on which he observes that this maid of honour was not accustomed to speak to the King in a manner to cause Fouquet the disquietude he mentions. Now, with great deference, it does not appear to us that the words of Fouquet meant that Mademoiselle de Montalais spoke to the King at all, but simply, "*You caused me a thousand fits of forgetfulness while I was speaking to the King,*" the words, "*en parlant au Roi,*" being applicable to Fouquet himself. In the next place, it seems to us also that the author

and scandals, especially as they related to Fouquet, that caused the King suddenly to shut him up again in stricter confinement than ever, spread the report of his death, conceal him under a mask, &c. &c. This is, in fact, the only motive assigned, namely, that Louis' vanity could not bear the idea of a person supposed to have succeeded twenty years before in seducing a woman whom he afterwards honoured with his regard, living at liberty on the same earth with himself. Now it will not be difficult to show that this reasoning is inapplicable.

The period of Fouquet's death, or of his sup-
has not understood that remarkable passage of one of Fouquet's declarations on his trial, in which, after giving an account of the various false accusations which his enemies had brought against him, and of the letters which he declares they had forged to produce his ruin, he exclaims, "Can one even listen to the recital of such enormous crimes without one's hair standing on end." "*Peut on bien seulement entendre le récit de crimes si énormes, sans que les cheveux en dressent sur la tête ?*" In this exclamation the author imagines that Fouquet referred to the crimes with which his enemies charged him ; now it seems to me perfectly clear and distinct, that he spoke of the crimes with which he charged them. The fabrication of the letters, the imputation of acts that he had never committed, the mingling up with his cause the names of persons likely to irritate the King against him, all of which he stigmatizes as deeds suggested by hell itself, and only worthy of demons. These were the enormous crimes of which he spoke, and which he attributed to his enemies. We have already noticed the mistake made by the same author in regard to the situation of Mademoiselle de Montalais at the court of France, and the period of her banishment. She bore a child to the Prince de Condé, who was afterwards declared legitimate by him, as we find from the memoirs of St. Simon.

posed abstraction by St. Mars from the sight of the world, is undoubtedly in the month of March 1680; now the period at which Madame de Maintenon's letters show that these exertions to ruin her were principally made, is in 1679, and in her letter to her brother of the 15th of December 1679, secure of her favour, she bids him laugh at the reports of bad-intentioned people. A number of her other letters prove that these reports had been going on during the whole of the year 1679, and even before that period; and during the whole of that time, what do we find in the conduct of the King towards Fouquet? the same gradual relaxation of his imprisonment. In November 1679, his brother is permitted to visit him; in December his daughter is permitted to lodge in the neighbouring chamber, and a staircase is constructed on purpose to give her constant admission into her father's apartments; and on the 25th of the same month, Louvois says that nothing could be more indifferent than whether M. Lenostre had seen the prisoners or not, but that the general order is, that they are only to be visited by the *officers and inhabitants of the town and citadel of Pignerol*.

Up to the very death of Fouquet, in short, and during the time that the reports against Madame de Maintenon were going on with the greatest vehemence, the King's severity towards Fouquet was daily diminishing, which is surely sufficient to show that the cause assigned for the supposed conduct

of Louis is inapplicable, even if it were sufficient, which it is not, to account for such conduct. There is, however, one word more to be said, which renders the cause assigned utterly inadmissible as such. There was but a remote vague suspicion of Madame de Maintenon having swerved from the path of virtue in regard to Fouquet. Such, however, was not the case in regard to Villarceaux: with regard to him there was a distinct and current accusation, and yet no royal vengeance overtook him in consequence of that fact.

We have now attempted to show that there was no sufficient cause whatsoever for the conduct attributed to Louis; that there is not the slightest reason for supposing an identity between Fouquet and the Man in the Iron Mask; and that there is no cause whatsoever for doubting that the superintendent died at Pignerol, in March 1680.

We shall add one or two words more, however, to show, that even were it proved that Fouquet did not then die at Pignerol, he could not be the Man in the Iron Mask, unless all the traditions regarding that prisoner were false. In the first place, the objections which we have urged in regard to the Duke of Beaufort, apply even more strongly to Fouquet. The prisoner in the Bastille informed his physician a few days before his death, that, as far as he could judge, he was about sixty. Now Fouquet, had he lived till the 19th of November 1703, must have been between eighty-eight and

eighty-nine years of age. The prisoner in the Bastille might have made a mistake of a few years, but it was not likely that in consulting with his physician he should have attempted to make him believe that he was twenty-eight years younger than he really was, nor that he should have made a mistake to such an amount. It would be a very difficult thing also for a man of eighty-eight to pass himself off upon any one as a man of sixty, and the whole account of the physician shows that he did not judge the prisoner to be more, if so much. In the next place, the accounts which we have received, and for believing which authentic we have given our reasons, distinctly mark a degree of reverence which was never shown to Fouquet during his first imprisonment; and in the third place, every account agrees, without any exception, in stating that the Man in the Iron Mask was above the ordinary height of men, graceful, and finely proportioned. On this point all statements, as we have said, agree, whether the account of the physician as given by Voltaire, or the account of Monsieur Palteau, who took the pains of tracing St. Mars and the prisoner from the Isle St. Marguerite to Paris, and of investigating the accounts of the peasantry at various places where they paused on the road. Now we know that Fouquet was "ni beau ni bien fait;" that he was not tall, but somewhat corpulent, and certainly in no degree resembling the pictures which have been drawn of the Man in the Iron

Mask. The theory of M. Jacob* is ingenious, and he certainly has supported it in the work he has published with very great talent and erudition. Indeed his abilities are only the more remarkable from the fact of his having done so much to establish a system which appears to us to have not the slightest foundation either in fact or probability.

Having considered all the various persons who have been placed as candidates for the painful reputation of this celebrated victim of despotism, and expressed our firm belief and conviction that not one of these has the slightest claim to be looked upon as the masked prisoner in the Bastille, it may be asked, whether we have any other theory to substitute in the place of those which have attempted to overthrow. We confess that such is not the case. The subject appears to us to be as dark and mysterious as ever.

Were it absolutely proved that the letter attributed to Barbesieux is authentic, and that in the dates he gives, that wild and inconsiderate minister was accurate, we should feel inclined to suspect that the detention of the Man in the Iron Mask was in some way connected with the suspicious death of Henrietta of England; and could it be distinctly shown that the prisoner conducted with such care

* We call it the theory of M. Jacob, although it had been promulgated before he was born, we believe, because the gentleman who assumes that name is the first who has supported it with ability.

and secrecy to Pignerol, by the Major of Dunkirk, was the same as the Man in the Mask, another suspicion might be aroused in regard to his former career; but vague suspicions can never be of any value in history, and we firmly believe that the first thing which will throw any light upon the most mysterious transaction which modern Europe has ever witnessed, will be, if ever it take place, the publication of the whole of the letters referring to that epoch in the archives of the various ministerial offices of France. There is proof in every line of the publication of M. Delort, that a great part of the correspondence between Louvois and St. Mars is still wanting; and if, under the superintendence of a minister of genius and erudition, the whole of the correspondence of the ministers of that time were given to the world, the science of history would derive the very greatest of benefits, even if we could not trace therein the real secret of the Man in the Mask, a secret which still remains undoubtedly to be discovered.

Before we close this chapter, we must say a few words more concerning the various persons confined in the prisons of France, but more especially in the Bastille, during the reign of Louis XIV.; and, having pointed out several remarkable instances of the misuse of that monarch's despotic authority, we must not fail to do him justice, and to show that personal feelings on the part of the King had very seldom any share in the motives which

led to the detention of various persons under his reign.

The arrest of Fouquet was followed, as we have said, by proceedings against a great number of the subordinate financiers, whose peculations were great and notorious, and with these the prisons were filled for two or three years. Mixed up with these, however, were occasionally, as we have shown, some of those who signalized themselves in the defence of Fouquet. The imprisonment of these persons, however, is to be attributed to the enmities of Colbert, Le Tellier, and other ministers, rather than to any personal feelings on the part of Louis himself. The other prisoners, during the following ten years, were supplied by the accomplices of the Chevalier de Rohan, by the infamous culprits engaged in the business of poisoning, and those whom they accused, and by a few charged with ordinary military crimes, such as insubordination, neglect of duty, &c. A very few are found to have been charged with libel, but it would appear that these libels were principally directed against individuals, or against religion; and that the King's personal feelings were in no degree mingled therewith.

In 1677, however, seven persons were arrested and thrown into the Bastille at once, charged with the same crime; and two of these seven, a lady of high rank and ancient family, and an officer in the navy, were subsequently executed. The crime, however, with which they were charged, was one which

certainly deserved death far more than many an offence still visited with the extreme penalty of the law in every part of civilized Europe.

These seven persons, it was clearly proved, had conspired together to effect the ruin of a gentleman of the name of Deshautes, who commanded in the town of Montmady. To effect their purpose, they had given false information to the government respecting him, had accused him of negotiating with the Spaniards, and had forged various letters and papers to sustain the charge.

In the space of ten years, I find but two cases of imprisonment for offences absolutely against the King, if we except the case of the Count de Lauzun. One was that of a farmer of the name of Martin, who was accused by two witnesses of making use of language in regard to Louis, which, on being repeated by the witnesses, was, in the opinion of the judges, so new, so strange, and so horrible in all its terms, that they seem to have advised the monarch not to proceed in a trial where the same language must necessarily be repeated over and over again. The trial was accordingly stopped, and the prisoner detained at the Bastille.

The second case was that of Lepine, a soldier of the guards, who confessed to some of his companions that he had entertained the intention of killing the King, and had placed himself, with several other soldiers, in a spot by which he ex-

pected Louis to pass, for the purpose of shooting him as he went by. On being interrogated, he declared that he was drunk when he made this confession; but upon his character being investigated, it was found that he was a violent and dangerous person, and after having been detained for some time in the Bastille, he was treated as a madman, and sent to the hospital.

In the year 1684 began an inquiry into various malversations, committed by the President du Guay, and others connected with the marine of Burgundy, and that affair filled the prisons of France with a number of persons more or less implicated in the transaction. The whole cause, however, offers nothing of any interest.

Almost all the other persons arrested and placed in the Bastille until the year 1691, were charged with various offences under the new laws, by which Louis had deprived the French Protestants of the last vestiges of their liberty. That those laws were most tyrannical and unjust, were cruel, barbarous, and iniquitous, there can be no doubt; but we must make a distinction between fanaticism and tyranny, at least as far as it affects the character of Louis XIV, who in point of religion was tyrannical only as one of a sect, and without any individual feeling, distinct from those by which other members of the same sect were animated.

The affair of the poison still went on, and several persons were arrested from time to time, on that

account, as well as for various other crimes ; but in almost all the cases, except those concerning religion, the accused persons were tried and generally proved beyond doubt to be guilty of offences of a character which fully justified their imprisonment. Several insane persons also were confined in the Bastille during that period.

In the year 1690, however, several men were arrested in Paris and at Versailles, in the garb of hermits and monks, and it was in general proved that these persons had in reality no title to the character they assumed, and were persons to whom suspicion might very well attach. The term of their imprisonment, however, was usually short, and they were either sent out of the country, or transferred to the hospital.

In the same year, a gentleman of the name of Dumesnil was arrested on the charge of threatening the King and Louvois, and it was distinctly proved that he was one of those persons the violence of whose disposition reaches so nearly to the bounds of madness as to render them more dangerous perhaps than persons absolutely insane. Various offences were proved against him which fully justified his detention, and the period of his liberation or his death is not known.

Charges in regard to religion were the principal causes of imprisonment during the next ten years. A number of persons, however, were arrested as spies, several officers in the army were placed in

confinement, in order to prevent them from violating the law respecting duels; and during that space of time only three cases of libel are found in the memoirs of the Bastille. Several instances of forgery, for the purpose of ruining others, are also shown to have conducted persons to the Bastille, and in one case a man was detained for some time on the accusation of entertaining a design of shooting the King. It was proved, however, in the end, that the persons who accused him were actuated by malicious motives, though his own conduct was in some degree suspicious, and he was ultimately set at liberty.

Such may be given, without examining farther, as a general picture of the state of prisons in France under the reign of Louis XIV.; and the most minute examination will show no disposition to tyranny on the part of Louis, and wonderfully little abuse of his despotic power even by his ministers, if we except the cases of Fouquet, Mathioli, Arwedicks, Lauzun, and the Man in the Mask.

Towards the close of the reign, indeed, there are one or two instances of persons being imprisoned in the Bastille, whose crime, if any, is not known, and who were guarded with strictness - as scrupulous, and treated with as much respect, as the famous Man in the Mask himself. But if we look to the state of England during the period over which we have lately cast our eyes; if we re-

Remember the various cases of persons tried for high treason under Charles II. and James I.; of the blood that was shed upon the scaffold; of the trials of Beasley, Messenger, Limerick, Cotton, and others; the deaths of Stayley, Coleman, Stafford, Russell, and all the others who were sacrificed to the virulent passions either of a fanatical multitude or a corrupt King, the same epoch in the history of France shines out clear and brilliant; the character of Louis rises by comparison, and even despotism loses part of its deformity, when put in opposition with a more multitudinous tyranny.

CHAPTER V.

Children of Louis XIV.—The Duke of Maine.—Louis XIVth's brother.—Philip Duke de Chartres.—The Prince de Condé.—Influence of Louvois.—Le Pelletier as minister of finance.—Death of Louvois.—Chamlay's refusal to succeed him in office.—Barbesieux's succession to the post of his father, Louvois.—Pontchartrain as comptroller-general.—Inflexible justice of his father.—Pontchartrain advanced to the Chancellorship.—Death of Seignelay.—Death of Colbert de Croissy.—Torey and Pomponne.—Private life of Louis.—Ascendancy of Madame de Maintenon.—Retirement and death of Madame de Montespan.—Marriage of the Prince de Conti.—His melancholy death.—Marriage of the Duc de Chartres.—His mother's indignation at that event.—Marriage of the Duc de Maine.—Amusements of Louis.—Severe illness of the King.—Public rejoicings for his recovery.—Character of Louis.—Selfishness of Madame de Maintenon.—Louis's encouragement of licentiousness.—Ravages in the Palatinate.—Generosity of Louis.—Tourville.—Duquesne.—The Duc de Montausier.—Harlay.—St. Simon.—Count de Boulainvilliers.—The Duc de Beauvilliers.—Dismissal of Chamillart.—Increase of the public debt.—Religious dissensions.—Revolt of the Cevennes.—Villars and the Camisards.—Cavalier.—Suppression of the Camisards.

WHILE the course of public events in Europe was such as we have described in the last chapter, and while Louis was pursuing to a close the war to which his ambition had given rise, a number of changes were taking place in his court itself, and a variety of events were occurring which affected France more than any other State. Some of these we have not spoken of yet, in order not to interrupt the march of other events, and some we have already noticed briefly, but must again touch upon here. These changes and events relate to Louis' family, his ministers, his court, and to the internal

government of France; and it may be as well to speak of them under those heads.

By Maria Theresa of Austria, Louis XIV. had six children, but five of these children died in infancy, and none was living at the period of which we now speak, but the Dauphin, who was married on the 7th of March 1680, to Mary Anne Christine of Bavaria, by whom he had three children, Louis Duke of Burgundy, father of Louis XV. Philip Duke of Anjou, who ultimately seated the Bourbons on the throne of Spain, and Charles Duke of Berri.

The French monarch, besides his legitimate children by the Queen, had many others, the fruits of his licentiousness. Of these, however, it will only be necessary to mark particularly those whom the monarch raised by public acts to the station of legitimate children. By the unhappy La Vallière, Louis had two; Louis Count of Vermandois, of whose fate we have spoken fully in another place, and Mary Anne, called Mademoiselle de Blois. Madame de Montespan contributed no less than six to the progeny of the royal seraglio; the Duke of Maine, the Count of the Vexin, the Count de Toulouse, Mademoiselle de Nantes, Mademoiselle de Tours, and Frances Mary, called Mademoiselle de Blois, after the marriage of her half-sister, the daughter of Mademoiselle de la Vallière. Two of these, however, Mademoiselle de Tours and the Count de Vexin, died early; the others survived their father.

Besides these, the royal family consisted of the

brother of the King, now Duke of Orleans, but still called Monsieur, and his son the Duke de Chartres; of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, the King's cousin and daughter of the former house of Orleans, who had married privately the Count de Lauzun; of several other daughters of that branch of the Bourbon family; of the Prince de Condé, famous in the wars of the Fronde, and still more famous for his victories over the enemies of France, with his son Henry, called in history M. le Prince, and of the Prince de Conti, son of that Prince de Conti who had married the niece of Mazarin, and his brother the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon.

Of the Dauphin we have spoken sufficiently. He appears to have possessed neither talents nor virtues of a very remarkable character, and seems to have been more celebrated for hunting the wolf with a splendid equipage, and for catching weasels in a barn with small terriers, than for any great acts in the field, or wisdom displayed in the cabinet.

With regard to the Dauphine we shall have more to say in noticing the court of the King during this period of his life, and it will only be necessary to speak of her character, which has generally been represented as sad, reserved, and solitary; giving her a fondness for retirement and meditation, and an utter abhorrence of the gaities and amusements of the court. Such, however, I do not find to have been the case; she certainly, on more than one occasion, took a very active part.

in the political affairs of the day ; and though from the letters of Madame de Maintenon we find that in her religious notions she was so stern and severe as to alarm that pious and politic lady for the effect upon the mind of the King, yet at the same time the Memoirs of Dangeau show her as frequenting constantly, in splendour and magnificence, the balls and other fêtes at the court, taking part in the lotteries which were frequently given by Louis as a delicate way of conferring gifts upon his favourites, and even sharing in the high gambling that was going on at the court of her father-in-law.

Of the Duke of Maine it is only necessary to say that, although he had displayed in his extreme youth a degree of precocious wit and talent, which greatly captivated his father, his latter years by no means justified the auguries which had been drawn from his infancy. Nevertheless the affection of the King towards him remained undiminished, and it would appear that he continued the favourite of the monarch amongst all his natural children. Of the rest of the King's illegitimate offspring we shall speak in giving the history of the monarch's court.

The brother of Louis XIV. had displayed very inferior talents, and a mind in every respect lower in tone than that of the monarch. Governed by favourites, passionate, violent, and without dignity, he had but few real friends, and was suspected of crimes whereof he very probably was innocent. We have noticed the unhappy death of Henri-

etta of England, his first wife; and not long after her death, he married again, choosing Charlotte Elizabeth, daughter of the Elector Palatine, a person totally different from the unfortunate Henrietta both in person and in mind. She was tall, large, coarse in appearance, and her mind and person seemed to have borne a great similarity to each other.

The duke himself was little and effeminate in appearance, capricious in his tastes and habits, timid under almost all circumstances, and entertaining for his brother, Louis XIV, a degree of admiration and love which made him yield the most blind obedience to his slightest wishes. He combined, as is usual, in narrow and trivial minds, licentiousness and devotion, and had so little guard upon his tongue that he constantly displayed his own weakness, by talking to everybody at times when he was not called upon to speak at all. One only trait redeemed the littleness of his character; this was his great personal courage, presence of mind, and talent in the field of battle. It is true that in his most famous campaigns he was aided and directed by some of the most skilful generals of France; but some part of the credit must be attached to him for appreciating and following immediately the best counsels given to him, and no one can deny to him the meed of personal courage after the various sieges, during which he was constantly in the trenches, and after the

battle of Cassel, where his cuirass was pierced by a musket-ball, his horse killed under him, and almost all the gentlemen around him killed or wounded. In everything else he was the same prince; weak, frivolous, and capricious; whether we regard him under the wild and extraordinary fits of jealousy with which he was occasionally seized, or think of him running from a distance to Paris to hear the bells ring, on the night of All Saints Day, or going to bed with a rosary in his hand, covered with medals and relics, and counting the beads till he fell asleep.

By his first wife, Henrietta, he had a daughter, Maria Louisa, afterwards Queen of Spain, of whose melancholy death we have spoken while mentioning the flight of the Countess of Soissons from Paris. By his second wife he had Philip, Duke de Chartres, and another daughter, Elizabeth, married to the Duke of Lorraine. But it is only of the Duke de Chartres that we may be called upon to speak more at large. To him descended all the courage of his ancestors, and it would seem from the manner in which he conducted himself during his first campaigns, that the skill and the genius of Condé, the rapid glance which saw advantages or disadvantages in a moment, and the energy of execution which insured success to schemes formed almost by intuition, would have also been displayed by the Duke de Chartres, had the opportunity been granted to him ere his mind became enervated, and his body enfeebled by debauchery. One of the

greatest misfortunes attended his youth which can afflict any one in such a situation. At the time when it was most necessary that his education should be conducted with regular steadiness, in a well-chosen and distinct course, one after another of those who had been selected for their virtues and their talents, to direct his studies and to govern his conduct, were carried off by death. Five of his governors died within a very short space of time, which caused one of the wits of Paris to observe that it was not possible to *rear* a governor for the Duke de Chartres.

The prince was then left entirely to the guidance and instructions of the Abbé Dubois, ¹⁶¹ a man full of corruption, who led the young Duke de Chartres into everything that was evil, dissolute, and disgraceful. Thus, while he was displaying the highest talents in every branch of study, while music, poetry, chemistry, painting, and geometry were amongst his amusements; while he was giving proof also of the highest military genius, and the most daring courage, his private life was one continual scandal, and one half of his time devoted to debauchery.

It was in the campaigns of the war which we have noticed in the last chapter but one, that the Duke of Chartres first distinguished himself; but Louis XIV. would not permit him to serve during the campaign of 1694, and he remained in inactivity in Paris for some time. French writers have

generally attributed the conduct pursued by Louis on this occasion, if not absolutely to jealousy of the duke's military genius, at least to a determination which he is said to have formed long before, in memory of the days of the Fronde, never to suffer any prince of the blood royal, who displayed great talents for war, to obtain much influence in the army. Perhaps such might be his motives, and it is difficult to find any other cause for his treatment of his nephew in 1694; treatment which, by exposing the young duke to temptation, by leaving him solely to the guidance of Dubois, and by dooming him to a long period of inactivity, was calculated to aggravate every evil in his character, and to plunge him more deeply than ever into vices already too much to be deplored.

The Prince de Condé, who had long been a martyr to the gout, had closed his career of glory by staying Montecuculi in Alsace, after the death of Turenne in 1675. He had as strongly displayed in that campaign, calm skill and military science as he had in his former actions displayed fire and genius. But, nevertheless, his body was exhausted by long fatigues, and he felt it absolutely necessary to retire from the scene in which he had so much distinguished himself. He continued to live at his splendid palace of Chantilli, collecting around him men of genius of every sort, and enjoying their conversation for several years. Old age, however, crept upon him with a rapid pace. He seldom, if

ever, visited the court, and though in 1677 and 1678 he was more than once called upon by Louis for his advice in regard to the operations of the war, he finally retired to Chantilli towards the year 1680, determined to mingle no more with courtiers or politics. Here the rapid decay of premature age made greater ravages every day, and he seldom quitted that abode, except on the occasion of the severe illness of the Marechal de Grammont, and on that of the wife of his grandson, called Madame de Bourbon, to whose sick bed he hastened in 1686, notwithstanding all that his friends could do to prevent him from undertaking the journey. He was taken ill, however, shortly after his arrival at Fontainebleau, and greatly increased that illness by his attention to his sick relation. But the event, however, which seems to have given a fatal turn to his disorder, was an effort made to prevent Louis XIV. from visiting the chamber of the Duchess of Bourbon, who was supposed to be dying, if not dead, of the small-pox.

Condé, who was in the room, but who had not been able to move from his chair for a great length of time, now rose, to the surprise of all, on hearing that the King was coming in, and advancing, stopped him in the door-way, remonstrating with him on the unnecessary danger he was incurring. Although the Duchess of Bourbon was one of the King's daughters by Madame de Montespan,*

* Mademoiselle de Nantes.

he suffered himself to be persuaded by the arguments of Condé, and left the apartment.

Condé, however, remained ; and from that hour he seems to have sunk rapidly in health, till at length, on the 11th of December 1686, at seven o'clock in the morning, the soul of the hero passed away, his mind having remained untroubled during his last illness, although it had been somewhat enfeebled during the latter years of his life. Condé was at that time rather more than sixty-five years of age, and it would appear that fatigue and excessive exertion had been the cause of the premature decay into which he fell ; for when we consider the great corporeal powers with which he set out in life, we cannot attribute to age that state of decrepitude in which he passed the two latter years of his life.

Louis, we are assured, regretted the prince very much, though there is reason to believe that he had never entirely forgotten the share which his cousin had taken in the wars of the Fronde. The monarch gave him, however, the last consolation that it was in his power to give, by granting pardon to his nephew, the Prince de Conti, who had incurred the royal indignation, and had been banished from the court. Condé lived to receive tidings of that event, and wrote with his dying hand a letter of thanks to Louis, which reached him on the very day of the hero's death, and affected him considerably.

In the course of the war, which ended with the peace of Ryswick, a complete change had taken place in the council of the King. Colbert, as we have seen, had died in the year 1683, deeply regretted by the monarch ; and although there can be no doubt that Louvois, whose ascendancy over Louis was at that time in its height, would willingly have monopolized all the places left vacant by the death of the great minister, and would also gladly have expelled from the council any of Colbert's relations who yet remained therein, Louis was too wise to yield entirely to the sway of Louvois, though perhaps, he did in fact, yield a great deal too far. Had the influence of Madame de Montespan indeed been what once it was, there can be no doubt that Louvois would have succeeded still farther ; but Madame de Maintenon had by this time obtained vast sway over the mind of Louis, and that sway she exercised to support the family of Colbert. His brother, Colbert de Croissy, retained the portfolio of foreign affairs ; the administration of the marine was confirmed to Seignelay, the son of the dead minister, who had long exercised the functions of that office ; and though Louvois obtained the supervision of public buildings, the more important branch of the finances was intrusted to another.

In regard to the choice of a person to fill the post of minister of finance, many great difficulties presented themselves ; but Louis was not long in

fixing upon Le Pelletier, Prevot des Marchands, a man much loved and respected by all who knew him, and equally gentle and prudent. On naming him to some of the courtiers as the person who seemed most fitting, some one remarked, "He is too gentle for a comptroller of finance." "That is the very reason I have chosen him," replied Louis, and Le Pelletier was accordingly appointed. His ministry continued as gentle as had been expected, but at length, finding it painful to himself in every respect, finding that he must oppress the people or leave the King without resources, he retired from the ministry, retaining all his influence and favour with Louis. For several months before he did retire he continually urged the King to permit him to do so. Louis, however, who esteemed and loved him, was unwilling to lose his services; nor did he indeed see any one capable of replacing him. In this dilemma, and in order to escape from Le Pelletier's importunities, Louis proposed to him that his brother should be advanced to the office from which he was about to retire. But the minister, who knew his brother's foibles, besought the King not to think of him with such a view; and the King having left it to himself to name his successor, Le Pelletier immediately proposed the well-known Pontchartrain, who was at once accepted by the King. Of him we shall have to speak hereafter; but it is now necessary to notice more particularly the death of Louvois him-

self, and the results of that event, first remarking, that Le Pelletier exhibited an extraordinary spectacle in his retreat, making use of as many intrigues and turns to avoid being recalled, under any shape, to the ministry, as other courtiers usually do to arrive at office.

Whether Louvois was really ever loved by Louis XIV, and whether he was regretted by the monarch at his death, has been left very doubtful by their contemporaries; but we learn from the authority of Dangeau, that Louis, on sending a message to the exiled James II, in regard to the death of the minister, made use of the following remarkable words: "Tell the King of England that I have lost a good minister, but that his affairs and mine shall not go the worse for it."

Such expressions certainly betokened no great grief, but at the same time they would seem to prove — were it not for the direct testimony of St. Simon, mentioned hereafter — that the King had entertained no idea of disgracing Louvois, though the very same memoirs in which these words are found represent Louis as calling his minister "insupportable in everything."

With the fiery energies of Louvois expired the last of those powerful minds which had aided Louis in his rise. Colbert, Turenne, Condé, had all passed from the scene, and the close was made by Louvois.

No great difficulty naturally presented itself in

regard to the successor of Louvois, for his son, the Marquis of Barbesieux, had already received the survivorship of the charge from the hands of the King. There was an obstacle, however : Louis had become so indignant with Louvois, that, if we are to believe the direct assertion of St. Simon, his disgrace and dismissal from all his offices would have taken place on the day following his death, had that event not occurred. That nobleman indeed, goes still further, and adds, that it was the intention of the King to have committed his minister to the Bastille ; and I am inclined to give credit to his statement from two circumstances. In the first place he informs us that he received his account from Chamillart, the well-known minister of Louis, to whom the King had told it ; and in the next place, because he repeats with scarcely any variation, the story told by Dangeau, who was present, of the message sent to the King of England on the death of Louvois, to which we have alluded before. Full of such feelings towards the dead minister, and engaged in a severe and disadvantageous war, it was not at all unnatural that Louis, who on many occasions showed that he thought his will might supply the place of justice, as well as of law, should seek to deprive Barbesieux of the post which had been promised him on the death of his father, and to bestow it on some one who possessed greater experience, greater talents, and his own confidence.

Under these circumstances, after giving a few

hours to consideration, and suffering the whole court to perceive that the death of his minister had in fact been a relief to his mind, he returned to his cabinet and sent for M. de Chamlay, who had long served under Louvois, and who had shown in an inferior station a fertility of resource, a rapidity of combination, and a capacity for both conceiving and executing great undertakings, which exactly qualified him for the post of minister at war, under the difficulties by which France was then surrounded. His probity was well known, and also his modesty; but neither the King nor the court were at all aware to what a pitch those two qualities were carried in his character. Louis represented to him, that the youth of Barbesieux, who was then only twenty-four years of age, was a great impediment to his succeeding his father in office, and that his levity and thoughtlessness formed a still greater obstacle, and the King ended by offering him, unconditionally, the post of the dead minister.

Chamlay, however, refused to receive it, saying at once to the King, that he was under too great obligations to Louvois to think of accepting such an office to the exclusion of the son of that minister. The King urged him, but in vain. Chamlay remained firm. He said all that he could in favour of Barbesieux; he offered to work under him, to give him every advice and assistance that experience could afford to youth, and he ended by declaring,

that though Louis might take the portfolio from Barbesieux, if he thought him incapable, he himself would never accept the office which had been held by Louvois and promised to his son.

After consulting with Madame de Maintenon, who had now become his chief adviser, Louis determined upon giving the office to Barbesieux, but at the same time he did not fail to let the young minister know as a warning, that he had been tempted to deprive him of the post; and he recounted to his courtiers the particulars of his conversation with Chamlay. Chamlay was not only surprised, but showed himself greatly abashed to hear the praises and compliments which were showered upon him, and Barbesieux, notwithstanding the unpleasant nature of the story as far as it regarded himself, had the good sense and the generosity to tell it everywhere, and to express his heartfelt gratitude to Chamlay for having saved him from disgrace.

Barbesieux, however, though he succeeded to the office of minister of war, did not obtain all the posts of his father. That of superintendent of the public buildings was separated from the rest; and even in regard to the affairs of war, Louis did not intrust to his new minister many of the important points which had been left entirely to the decision of Louvois. The King's own labours were increased considerably to supply the defects of Barbesieux's inexperience, and two or three more hours of his

time, we are informed by Dangeau, were thenceforth given up to business. The picture of Louis's life at that time, as afforded by the journal of the nobleman we have just cited, shows that for several years he employed Barbesieux more in the character of his private secretary than in any other capacity, making him write letters under his dictation, and thus at once inuring him to business, and gaining a knowledge of his character, of his faults, and his talents.

Notwithstanding all this, the levity of Barbesieux still gave the King great offence, and Louis at length determined to write upon the subject to the minister's uncle, the Archbishop of Rheims. A fragment of the letter is given by Voltaire, and although that author admits that he cites from memory, the King's words are too much to his honour to be omitted. They are to the following effect: "I know what I owe to the memory of M. de Louvois, but, if your nephew does not change his conduct, I shall be obliged to take a decided part. I shall be very sorry for it, but I must do it. He has talents, but he does not make a good use of them. He gives suppers too often to princes, instead of working. He neglects his business for his pleasures. He keeps the officers too long waiting in his antechamber. He speaks to them with haughtiness, and sometimes even with harshness."

The office of superintendent of public buildings was conferred upon M. de Villacerf, who had been

also much attached to Louvois, and was connected by birth both with that minister and with Colbert; but the real intendance of public buildings was held by the famous Mansard, who was always nobly rewarded by Louis for the talents and abilities which he exerted in embellishing the French metropolis.

We have shown that even in the midst of the war, Le Pelletier threw off the labours and cares of government in the year 1688, and that he pointed out for his successor M. de Pontchartrain, who was immediately appointed to the vacant office by Louis. On the character of this new comptroller-general we must pause for a moment, as there are several circumstances connected with his history which are highly interesting, and highly creditable to himself and to his family. His father was a president of a chamber of accounts in Paris, and was chosen for one of the judges of Fouquet. On that occasion—though there can be no doubt that he was a man of considerable ambition, and one who from the high posts which his ancestors had held in the state had every prospect of rapid advancement—Pontchartrain, the father, resisted all the intrigues of the court, and remained inflexibly just, being one of those who voted for the mildest sentence on the superintendent. Vengeance marked him from that hour, and he felt that every prospect of rising was gone. He was at that time extremely poor in reference to his station in society; but although the only thing that he sought

for was to obtain the survivorship of his office of president for his son, even that was refused him, and the young man remained for a length of time merely a counsellor in the Court of Requests. He now applied himself entirely to the business of the courts during the day, and passed the evening in that distinguished society from which his poverty did not exclude him. Here his pleasing manners and his brilliant wit gained him friends, and suddenly, in the year 1677, Colbert, who had hitherto appeared his most inveterate enemy, appointed him chief president of the Parliament of Brittany. He there distinguished himself highly, especially in regard to the finances of the province; and gradually drawing the attention of government to himself, he was appointed, in 1687, intendant of the finances, then under the control of Le Pelletier. He remained two years in that office ere he was further advanced; but then, Le Pelletier, on his own resignation, pointed him out to the King, and he was raised to an office which he by no means coveted. A year after, however, the death of M. de Seignelay left vacant the departments of the Marine and the King's household, and Pontchartrain was immediately appointed to them, which might well raise him to the height of his ambition.

“He was,” says St. Simon, “a thin little man, well formed for his small size, with a countenance from which sparks of fire and wit broke forth with-

out cessation, and which fulfilled even more than it promised. Never was there so much promptitude in comprehending, so much lightness and pleasantness in conversation, so much justness and rapidity in reply, so much facility and solidity in labour, so much expedition, so much sudden knowledge of men, or more art in winning them. With all these qualities, an enlightened simplicity and a prudent gaiety floated above all, and rendered him charming both in trifles and in affairs of importance."

St. Simon speaks highly of the probity of Pontchartrain, and the charity of himself and his wife was unbounded. He found himself, however, constantly embarrassed with the finances, having continually to oppose the unjust demands of many persons favoured by the King, and in the course of his short ministry being under the necessity more than once of resisting manfully those unjust and oppressive taxes with which the necessities of the state forced Louis to load his people. The capitation tax was one of the first which he had to combat, seeing plainly the dangers which such an impost might produce at an after period. A second was the tax called the tenth, equally obnoxious and equally dangerous. The latter he successfully rejected, not even suffering it to be brought formally before the council. The former, however, he was forced by superior influence to receive, notwithstanding his unceasing repugnance.

On these, however, and on various other occasions, Pontchartrain applied eagerly to Louis for permission to resign the management of the finances, but was not permitted to do so; till at length, in 1699, the Chancellor Boucherat was seized with that illness which terminated in his death. Louis, when informed that the chancellor could not survive the day, took an opportunity of asking Pontchartrain if it would give him pleasure to receive the seals. Pontchartrain instantly threw himself at the King's feet, almost wild with joy, exclaiming, "Oh Sire, if I have pressed you so frequently to deliver me from the finances, in order to remain simply minister and secretary of state, judge what must be my feelings, when you offer me the same deliverance with the highest place to which I can aspire."

The King then told him not to inform anybody of what had taken place; but the moment that Boucherat was dead, Pontchartrain was appointed chancellor, and the post which he had formerly occupied was bestowed upon Chamillart, a minister by no means of the first capacity, but an agreeable companion, and a well-meaning, good-tempered man. He is said first to have recommended himself to the King by his skill at billiards, and in his fate resembled not a little one of the balls with which he played, being driven constantly by one intrigue against another, and not seeming very

much conscious of, or very anxious regarding, the direction in which he was impelled.

Of Seignelay, whose death we have before mentioned, we have already given various particulars, and need no farther touch upon his history than to say that he died in the year 1690, still in the prime of his life. That he was by no means equal to his father, Colbert, there can be little doubt; but nevertheless, in the execution of his office he showed talents and vigour sufficient to make him regretted in an age when energy of any kind was rare in the court and councils of Louis XIV. His death would appear to have been occasioned by consumption, brought on by excessive fatigues, and by a taste for dissipation which had early proved injurious to his health.

Before this war was absolutely concluded, another member of the family of Colbert was swept from the scene. Colbert de Croissy, on whom had been bestowed the portfolio of minister for foreign affairs, died in July 1696. He was succeeded in office by his son, who was afterwards celebrated under the name of Torcy, and who has left behind him memoirs of considerable importance, though undoubtedly somewhat distorted for the purpose of palliating or obscuring affairs in which he had a part. He was at this time extremely young for a post of such importance, and the King exacted that the minister should place himself almost en-

tirely under the direction of Pomponne, whose daughter he engaged to marry, according to an arrangement made by Louis.

Pomponne had by this time regained the good graces of the King, and he willingly gave his daughter to Torcy, who had many amiable qualities to recommend him. The Marquis afforded his counsels in the same amiable and gentle manner in which he had conducted all the other great affairs wherein he had mingled, and the father, the daughter, and the son-in-law lived together in Paris and Versailles in the greatest possible harmony and the most perfect union.

Such were the principal changes which had taken place in the ministry of Louis XIV. previous to the peace of Ryswick. We now come to notice the events which affected the court of that monarch. This may be done by giving some account of the leading courtiers who at this time were moving in the glittering scenes of Paris and Versailles, but more especially by noticing some of the details of the private life of the monarch ; who, though undoubtedly fond of pleasure, was most diligent, accurate, and laborious in the government of his country.

Every day, almost without exception, Louis was present at the council. On Sundays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays every week a council of state was held, to which no one was admitted but the King, the Dauphin, and the principal ministers. The

royal council of finance sat on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and to it a number of other persons had access. On Monday, once in a fortnight, what was called a council of despatches was held by the King, who admitted various other persons besides his actual ministers. These councils were generally summoned in the morning, and ordinarily lasted a considerable time, but after dinner the King usually transacted business with one of the secretaries of state, which also occupied him a considerable time; and, after the death of Louvois, he devoted, as we have before shown, from two to three hours more every day, in order to correct the inexperience of Barbesieux. That part of the King's time which was left unoccupied by this scrupulous attention to the affairs of state, was now principally passed with Madame de Maintenon, and very frequently, after a certain period, he transacted business with his ministers in the afternoon, in her presence and in her apartments. Unless her opinion was asked, she seldom if ever made any observation, though the King and his ministers consulted aloud before her; but Louis would often turn to her himself, and covering what he felt to be a weakness by an air of jest, would ask her with a smile for her good opinion on the question under discussion.

Nevertheless, though the ascendancy of Madame de Maintenon was complete and obvious to every one, it was long before Madame de Montespan could bring herself to believe that with all her

beauty, her talents, and her graces, she should never be able to recover her empire over the heart of Louis, and banish from his court a rival inferior to herself in almost every respect. She thus continued to linger on at the court of France, her haughty spirit embittered by the triumph of her rival, and her heart stung by seeing, during 1684 and 1685, Madame de Maintenon occupying that place in the King's carriage during all his journeys which she had formerly occupied, while she herself came after in a carriage with her own children, looked upon at court as nothing more than the mother of the King's illegitimate progeny. As long as there was any hope, she continued to solicit the King's regard by those small and kindly attentions which were well calculated to gain upon a kindly and a feeling heart; but, unfortunately, Louis considered all attentions as his right. It was in vain that Madame de Montespan decorated herself, or her apartments, with all that could recall to his mind the first years of his passion, or that she presented to him, as a New Year's Gift, in 1685, a magnificent book, filled with the most beautiful miniature pictures of all the towns which had been taken in Holland in 1672, and enriched by accounts of those towns and their capture from the pen of Racine and Boileau.

The ascendancy of Madame de Maintenon continued and increased; and though from time to time the King still visited the apartments of his

former mistress, the state of neglect in which she lived, is made sufficiently evident by a speech which she addressed to the King on the occasion of one of their journeys to Marly. She suddenly informed him after their arrival, that she had a favour to ask of him, which was, during their sojourn at that place, to leave to her the care of entertaining the people of the second carriage, and of diverting the antechamber. The reply of the monarch to this cutting reproach we do not find recorded, but it is very certain that she soon after detached herself greatly from the court, and in a few years the King and Madame de Maintenon, importuned by her occasional presence, had the harshness to signify to a woman who had been seduced from virtue by the one, and had been the benefactress of the other, that she had better retire altogether. To this harshness was added the additional and unnecessary cruelty of causing the message to be conveyed to her by her own son, the Duc de Maine. That weak prince, vain and narrow-minded, though perhaps deserving as well as any man the insignificant title of *clever*, preferred his nurse and governess to his own mother, and by carrying to her the most painful communication that she could have received, lost entirely the love of one who had loved him but too well.

Before she retired, however, Madame de Montespan had the satisfaction of seeing the marriage of her daughter, Mademoiselle de Nantes, to the young

Duc de Bourbon ; and indeed the fondness of *Louis* for her children in no degree decreased in consequence of his alienation from their mother ; but, on the contrary, his love for them, especially for the *Duc de Maine*, continued to increase during his whole life. *Madame de Montespan*, from that period, passed an erratic and unquiet life, wandering from Paris to different watering places, or to her estates in the country, devoting herself to works of charity, but never losing the queenly air, manner, and pride which she had acquired when ruling the court of *Louis XIV.*

The feelings of repentance and remorse which *Madame de Montespan* had always felt, even during the height of her criminal connexion with the King, now threw her into the arms of religion, ^{and} offering the only source of consolation, the only way of atonement, the only hope of pardon. The first injunction of the priest, to whom she applied for direction and assistance, went to the utter humiliation of that excessive pride which had been her besetting sin. He would hear of nothing less than that she should submit herself entirely to the will of her husband, the *Marquis de Montespan*, and he forced her to write to him offering so to do, and either to go to him, if he would permit her, or to repair to any place that he would appoint, and live in any manner that he thought fit.

The *marquis*, however, replied at once, that willingly he would never see her again, and that *Madame*

de Montespan might do whatsoever she pleased, so long as she let him hear no more about her. Thus she lingered on, full of remorse, full of repentance, so far as remorse and repentance can exist without true humility of heart. Her apprehensions of death, before its arrival, were great, and she never dared to lie down to sleep without four or five women watching in her room, on whom she laid an injunction to continue talking during the whole night, in order that, if she woke, she might be satisfied they were not asleep. At length, one day, having caused herself, it would seem, to be bled unnecessarily, she became suddenly and violently ill, and died, at the waters of Bourbon, in the beginning of the year 1707. Her son, by her husband, whom she had long treated with indifference, was with her at her death, and though she had reached the age of sixty-six, we are told that she had lost scarcely any part of that beauty which had proved so fatal to her in her youth.

The marriage of Mademoiselle de Nantes had been preceded by that of the daughter of Madame de la Vallere with the young Prince de Conti; but the marriage, though attended with much domestic happiness, had been without fruits. The ardour of the prince's passion for his beautiful cousin had been so great as to break through all the rigid etiquette of the court of Louis in order to express his passion to her and gain her affection, and the love which he entertained towards her continued so

strong as to prove ultimately the cause of his own death. He had, with his brother, the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon quitted the court secretly in the year 1685, and proceeded to join the army in Hungary, then warring against the Turks. After distinguishing himself greatly, he returned with his brother to the court, and obtained pardon from Louis, who was displeased with their expedition; but he had scarcely returned a month when his beautiful wife was seized with the small-pox, of the most virulent kind. It was then the custom for persons attacked by a disease which at that time amounted almost to a pestilence, to shut themselves up with a few attendants, and avoid all communication with other people. The prince, though he had never had the disease, determined from the first to remain with his wife, and consequently was very shortly afterwards seized with the same disease. The Princess de Conti, after being some time in great danger, recovered, but recovered only in time to attend the death-bed of her husband, who expired a very few days after having been taken ill. The princess was deeply afflicted by the loss of her husband, who was also regretted by the whole court; but, recovering fully, she retained all her beauty, notwithstanding the disease from which she had suffered; and we are told that her portrait having afterwards fallen into the hands of a tribe of American Indians, was taken for a divinity, and worshipped accordingly.

The Prince La Roche-sur-Yon succeeded to his brother, but, though he displayed every kind of talent, with extraordinary genius and courage in affairs of war, though he was loved by the whole court, and adored by the populace, Louis himself had conceived a distaste to his young relation which he could never vanquish.

The next marriage at the court, which it may be necessary to mention, is that of the second daughter of Madame de Montespan, called after her sister's marriage, Mademoiselle de Blois, with her cousin, the Duc de Chartres, only son of the King's brother, the Duke of Orleans. This marriage was by no means arranged without difficulty, for it was neither desired by the prince himself, nor by any of his family; and his mother, whom we have mentioned before, as the second wife of Monsieur, was so vehemently opposed to the union of her son, who had a contingent, but no very distant claim, upon the throne of France itself, with the natural daughter of the King, that we are told she exacted a positive promise from the young duke not to consent to the proposed alliance.

The Abbé Dubois, however, worked upon the prince. Louis' power over his brother was as despotic as over any of his subjects, and he was soon induced to consent. When the father was thus gained, and the son was shaken, Louis sent for the Duc de Chartres, and in a conversation with him, in which he "announced his wishes," St. Simon

tells us, "with that fearful majesty so natural to the King," he persuaded the young duke to give his unwilling consent, and then forced the duchess herself to yield. She left the King's cabinet, we are told, in high indignation and anger, and when her son followed her, drove him away from her with tears and reproaches. She appeared, however, that night at the court, but she still displayed her indignation and rage with the most excessive violence, weeping bitterly in the presence of the whole court, and replying to the King's marked attentions with the most cold and even insulting rudeness. The monarch did not forget himself for a moment, and continued to treat her with the utmost politeness even to the end; while she concluded the night by turning her back upon the King at the moment that he was bowing to her, and opened the scene the next morning by bestowing a box on the ear upon her son, in presence of the whole court.

Voltaire, who was ignorant of these facts, declared loudly, when they were published by persons better informed than himself, that they were false, and that persons who spread such reports could have very little knowledge of the court of France. He only showed his own ignorance thereof, however; for surely the Duke of St. Simon, who relates the whole, and was an eye-witness of that which he does relate, must have been a better judge of the usages of the court of France, than an author

whose wit and talent never obtained for him a footing at that court, which they would have done if his violence and domineering irritability had not excluded him.

The marriage of the Duc de Chartres, which took place on the 18th of February 1692, was almost immediately followed by that of the Duc de Maine to Mademoiselle de Charolais, daughter of the Prince de Condé, a dwarf in size, with talents which might have made her the ornament and delight of society, had they not been clouded and perverted by most immeasurable vanity. The family of Condé were as much delighted with the union of their daughter to the Duke of Maine, as the family of Orleans had been averse to the marriage of the Duc de Chartres; and by the connexions which Louis thus formed for his natural children, there can be no doubt that he sought to form for them a strong support after the period of his own reign.

These two marriages filled the court of France with gaieties and rejoicings; and having mentioned the distribution of Louis' labours, we may now take some notice of his amusements. Hunting and shooting were still amongst his favourite exercises, and though, consulting the gravity of his age, he now no longer took a part, in person, in the carousals and other pageants of that kind, he encouraged his nobility to appear in them, doing all that he could to render such festivals still splendid

and magnificent. The dresses, devices, &c., which the various cavaliers assumed, were generally taken either from some part of history, or from some of the romances then current. Thus in the year 1685 the carousal was divided into two bands, headed by the Dauphin and the Duke of Bourbon, and each of these bands consisted of twenty knights. The subject was taken from the wars of Granada, and the dresses of the knights, as well as of their pages and squires, are said to have been most magnificent. The prize was a splendid sword, set with diamonds, and was won by one of the Princes of Lorraine, who received it on the field from the hands of the King.

The mornings of many of the King's days, after the business of the state was over, were passed either in inspecting public works that were going on, reviewing his troops, examining or ordering works of art, witnessing such diversions as the carousal, and running at the ring; or else in the manly sports of the field, in which he was extremely prompt and dexterous. It happened, indeed, that more than once Louis saved himself and the ladies, who generally accompanied him, from the rage of the stag or boar, rendered furious by the dogs, through his skill and presence of mind. In the evenings, we find that, for a considerable length of time, there were either balls, lotteries, in which the King in general gave the prize, plays, operas, or what was then called Apartments.

In regard to the lotteries and the balls we have already spoken sufficiently, and it may only be necessary to say further, that in general on those occasions, when any great additional expense was required from his courtiers to appear in splendour at the magnificent festivals which he gave, the King found means to supply the resources delicately. We thus find that on various occasions he sent considerable sums of money to the households of the princes of the royal family, in order to meet some additional expense of the kind imposed upon the ladies and gentlemen who attended them. In regard to the plays and operas themselves, it is only necessary to say, that Racine and Quinault were still living, and were the delight of a court which, by its measured but false proprieties, was exactly suited to their productions; but it is curious to remark, that between the acts of such stiff tragedies as *Mithridates*, the princesses and nobles of the court danced for the amusement of the audience.

To the Apartments, as an institution of Louis himself, we must pay more particular attention. With views and purposes which may be easily conceived, and which were in themselves highly laudable, whatever mistake might be made as to the means, and however unsatisfactory might be the result, Louis was anxious to keep his nobility in constant communication with himself and with each other, and to promote as much as possible social amusements in his court. For that purpose

he threw open the grand suite of apartments in his palace, three times a week, to the whole court, from seven o'clock in the evening till ten. The best music that France could produce opened the evening, and every sort of game that could be devised to amuse the courtiers was provided amply. Billiards, lansquenet tables, cards, &c., were laid out in every quarter; the most perfect liberty reigned through the whole, and it was announced to every one, that if all the tables were found to be full, the guests had merely to order others to be brought by the attendants. The suite of apartments was brilliantly lighted up, and refreshments of all kinds were amply provided.

From time to time the King appeared himself in the Apartments, at first very frequently, but after a time, when the death of his principal ministers cast the burthen of public affairs upon his own experience, Louis himself was seldom able to enjoy the splendid scene which he had created, but was obliged to pass the evening with his different ministers in the transaction of important business. At ten the King went to supper, to which meal guests of a certain rank were admitted, and after supper some other amusement succeeded, which terminated, however, at an early hour, and the day closed by the monarch retiring.

Such were the amusements of Louis' court; but the regular train of these amusements was of course interrupted from time to time by other events. On

Sunday in general there was no entertainment of any kind, and the anniversary of the death of the Queen-mother was always solemnly kept by her son with a degree of filial piety which did honour to his heart. Journeys to Fontainebleau and other places also interrupted frequently the formal regularity of the court; but one of the greatest cessations which these amusements underwent took place in the end of the year 1686, in consequence of the severe illness of the King.

Towards the middle of the year it had been discovered that Louis XIV. was affected by the severe and dangerous complaint called fistula, a disease then extremely dreaded on account of the rarity of its cure at that time, from want of sufficient skill and practice on the part of the medical men. Felix, his chief surgeon, a man naturally of considerable nerve, entertained great apprehensions in regard to performing the only operation which could cure the King, upon a person so elevated in station and so necessary to the country. Louis, very speedily after the first discovery of the disease, expressed his determination to submit to the operation immediately; but Felix besought him, it would seem, to grant him some interval in order to gain greater skill and dexterity, by making the attempt upon all persons whom he could find in a similar situation with that of the King. A number of cases were found in the hospitals, and a number, we are told, were brought to the house of Louvois, and

there privately treated. Many, it would appear, died; but in the course of these extensive experiments Felix invented an instrument which greatly abridged the operation.

When Felix had gained sufficient confidence he informed Louis that he was ready, and the King appointed the 18th of November for the operation. No one had been made acquainted with his purpose but Madame de Maintenon, Louvois, the confessor La Chaise, and the medical attendants; and the operation, which was long and painful, was performed at seven o'clock in the morning, without producing from the lips of the King one exclamation of suffering or complaint. When the whole was over, he sent to inform his family of what had occurred, and though obliged, of course, to remain in bed, he continued unremittingly to transact the business of the nation, saw a number of his courtiers, and in fact exerted himself as much as possible to prevent any false impressions in regard to the state of his health from being spread through the various courts of Europe.

On the following day all the foreign ministers were admitted to the chamber of the King, and he conducted himself throughout with that firmness and determination of which he undoubtedly gave many striking examples in the course of his life. Not so, however, Felix, if we may believe a common anecdote of the time. He had performed the

operation upon the monarch with all the skill and coolness which were required, but when it was over, he was seized with a fit of trembling, and we are assured that his hands never entirely recovered from the state of tremor into which they were thrown.

Notwithstanding all the care that had been taken, several subsequent operations were necessary to render the cure complete, and near a month elapsed ere Louis could be considered entirely out of danger. He subsequently proceeded to Paris, accompanied by the principal members of the royal family, to return thanks for his complete recovery, and the joy which the people displayed to see their monarch once more amongst them in full health, shows strongly how high was still the popular feeling in his favour, after having held the reins of government in his own hands for six-and-twenty years. Louis would suffer no soldiers to guard the way, in order that the people might have liberty to approach him; but all the shops were shut, the people themselves in innumerable multitudes lined the streets as he passed, shouts of joy and gratulations were poured upon his ear at every step, bonfires blazed at the corners of all the streets, and for several days the populace could scarcely prevail upon themselves to resume their ordinary occupations, so wild were they with the delirium of joy. The whole account of this scene evinces clearly,

that though Louis was a despot, his despotism up to this period had been of a kind to be unknown or unfelt by his people.

On the same day the monarch dined with the city of Paris. The entertainment was of course as splendid and magnificent as it could be; but nothing occurred worthy of remark, except the fact itself, that this was the first time a King of France had ever dined at the Hotel de Ville. On another occasion, Louis had again to submit to a severe operation, for a disease of which I do not know the nature, but which the surgeons of that day called an anthrax. The disease itself was very painful, and the operation equally so; but the King bore it with the same patience and fortitude as before, and in every event of the kind showed that self-command which, if it be not absolutely heroism, approaches so near it, that it may be doubted whether the most famous acts—I do not say the greatest—of the most famous men of antiquity were derived from any other source in the human mind.

A historian has declared with truth, that Augustus Cæsar died an actor, but probably, had he examined as strictly the lives of patriots and philosophers, he would have found in their most famous sayings and their most celebrated acts, fully as much of the player as in the *nunc plaudite* of the Emperor. It is something, if in the human mind, especially a mind inured to luxury and to enjoy-

ment, there can be found a power of any kind strong enough to conquer bodily suffering, and to meet events awful in themselves, with firmness and with dignity.

Between the characters of Louis and Augustus there was doubtless a considerable resemblance; but it would seem to me that the French King, though doubtless full of what his nation call representation, was not so entirely acting a part through life as the Roman ruler. Louis, it would seem, as often conquered his own feelings in order to produce an effect upon himself as upon others, and though the power of conceiving what is great may be different from the quality which leads us spontaneously to great acts, yet that very power of appreciating what is great, when joined with a power over ourselves to conquer inferior impulses, is in itself no small gift from Heaven. Louis might indeed through life be seeking to appear great without possessing altogether that generous and expansive soul—that rarest jewel in all the crowns of earth—in which greatness of action proceeds from greatness of feeling, and a powerful mind acts but under the impulse of a magnanimous heart; but he certainly did possess the capability of conceiving what was great, and the power over himself to conquer a variety of natural feelings, in order to arrive at that which he had thus conceived. It is only when the impulses of the heart and the qualities of the mind are sufficient to each other, the one to impel

and the other to execute, that real and continuous grandeur of conduct can ever be obtained; but when, as I believe to have been the case with Louis, the impulses of the heart are inferior, and greatness is sought by an effort of the mind, there will be continual irregularities as passion and circumstances struggle against the unaided powers of the understanding. To this cause may, I think, be attributed many of those errors which are observable in the conduct of the French monarch. Much of his ambition, all of his licentiousness, the deeds of tyranny that he occasionally committed, the acts of injustice perpetrated by himself or under his name,—all would tend to prove that the heart of the monarch was not really great; though a number of remarkable instances of dignity, generosity, forbearance, kindness, and scrupulous justice even when he himself was concerned, show that he had the capability of comprehending and executing really great things, when not assailed by passions in disguise or overpowered by temptations too strong for resistance.

We have exposed a number of his faults and crimes with an unsparing hand, and must therefore not omit any trait of magnanimity which is recorded of Louis upon good authority. A number of these traits are embraced in the accounts of his life during the period of which we are now speaking, and the principal part of them are sanctioned by such authority as to render them indisputable.

Although the gratification of his ambition brought as a consequence excessive exactions upon his people, yet, on many occasions Louis strove to mark his sense of the zeal with which they supported him by remitting even a part of that which they were willing to grant. In 1685 the States of Burgundy assembled, and at once voted to the King, as usual, a *free gift*, which on the present occasion amounted to a million. The readiness which they displayed gratified Louis extremely, and he remitted immediately more than a sixth part of the gift.

In 1687 a new lease of the royal farms was made upon a fresh estimation of their value, and the revenue was considerably increased. The farmers, however, were still willing to bid more, and the eagerness of their rivalry would have carried them to offer very exorbitant sums had not the King himself stopped the bidding, and refused to receive any further offer beyond a certain amount. When some of his officers remonstrated with him on this occasion, and showed him that he might have obtained a considerable advance, the King replied, "I am persuaded that when these gentry raise so high their offers, they always find some means of reimbursing themselves at the expense of the people."

Whenever there was a quarrel between any of the members of the court and their relatives, Louis was always the first to interfere in order to restore peace and harmony; but we find that in almost

every instance he did so, not as a King but as a friend, and that where his counsels were rejected or his efforts ineffectual, he displayed no resentment. Neither do we find, in instances where he was personally offended, and marked his indignation towards any persons by forbidding them his court, that he made the least opposition to the proceedings of their friends, in showing them every sort of kindness and attention, or that he displayed the smallest displeasure towards his courtiers, his attendants, or his family, for visiting, consoling, and supporting those who were in disgrace at court. Several very remarkable instances of his magnanimity in this respect are on record; and on one occasion his brother himself went publicly to visit the Princess de Carignan, at a time when the indignation of the King was greatly excited against herself and her husband, without giving the slightest offence to the despotic monarch. Louis, indeed, was on almost all points exceedingly placable. He displayed none of the tyrannical irritability of a Henry VIII, none of the cruel suspicions of Louis XI, though his power was perhaps more extensive than that of either. He was indeed jealous, perhaps, of the dignity of his crown, and was occasionally affected by disgusts, taken apparently without reason, to people of talent and merit; but personally he was a man of few enmities, difficult to offend, easy to serve, liberal of courtesies, weighing carefully the words of blame, from a knowledge that they

came more heavily from his mouth than from that of other men. With all the majesty of his demeanour, which he naturally possessed and increased by study, he was easy of access, and heard patiently and placably complaints of himself and of his government.

A few instances of Louis' conduct in these respects may not be unnecessary here. The celebrated Montal, who had certainly served the King with the greatest courage and fidelity, had been forgotten, or at all events had not been noticed in a promotion of French generals, who were raised to the rank of Marshals of France in the year 1695. Hurt in the highest degree, Montal presented himself before the King, and complained with great vehemence and anger of the neglect. He reproached the King severely, and ended by declaring, that he wished a ball which had passed through his hat at the battle of Steinkirk had gone through his head instead. Louis heard him patiently, and replied, "Calm your grief, Montal. I love and esteem you. Do not despair of your good fortune." The words might have been insignificant, but they were almost immediately followed by the appointment of Montal to the command of a considerable district in Flanders, with powers very seldom bestowed upon any general in the service.

The degree of familiarity which Louis permitted to his courtiers is shown by the instance of Ruvigny, who one morning came to him in haste to tell him

that he had just bought an estate of the Duke de Chartres, but that he wanted ten thousand crowns of the price, and had come to the King to borrow that sum of him, as of his best friend. The monarch replied immediately, "You do not deceive yourself, and I give them to you, Ruvigny, with right good will."

There can be no doubt, that in conferring a favour, or in giving an office, the manner of the King doubled the pleasure received. When the Duke de Beauvilliers was appointed chief of the council of finance, he represented to the monarch that he had no experience, that he was yet a young man, and, saying he feared the King would repent of his choice, he begged him to reflect upon what he was doing. Louis replied, that he had considered the matter fully, but that he would give the duke himself time to consider of the matter. On the following day Beauvilliers accepted the office, still saying, however, that he feared he should be found incompetent. The King only replied, "You give me pleasure by accepting this post of your own free will, for if you had not, I should have had recourse to my authority to make you accept it."

Louis was not alone contented with displaying this sort of courtesy himself, but exacted the same demeanour from his ministers, as we have shown already in the case of his letter to the Archbishop of Rheims, concerning Barbesieux; and an instance of the effect is found in the conduct of Seignelay,

towards the Duc de Crequi. On going to Seignelay to receive the patent of his appointment to a provincial government, the minister put it into his hands, and told him with a smile that he had also ready for him the warrant for the pension of Madame de Crequi. The duke was astonished, as his wife was not by any means of an age to attract the attention of the gallant monarch, by her personal beauty, and he consequently asked what the the secretary meant. He then found that the King had bestowed upon her a pension of twelve thousand livres in consideration of the services rendered by her family to the throne.

The judicial decision of Louis against himself is well known, and the sum was sufficient to have rendered it a considerable object even to a monarch. The facts were as follows. A number of the citizens of Paris had, at different times, encroached upon the domain of the crown, in the ramparts and fortifications of the city, and had, by the permission of the magistrates of the Hotel de Ville, filled up the ditches, levelled the walls, and built houses upon the ground. This had proceeded for some time, when the King's law officers, seeing that a prescriptive right would soon be established, proceeded against the holders of these houses in order to recover possession for the crown. The cause was ably argued on both sides, and the votes of the judges were equally divided. Under these circumstances Louis decided the cause himself. "I see very well," he said "that

if I had not been concerned in this affair, several other votes would have been given against the claim; I therefore give my voice against the domain of the crown."

The amount of property involved was immense; but perhaps it was easier to make this decision against himself, than to bear with patience the well-known judgment of the Count de Grammont in a matter of far less importance. The King was at play, as was too frequently the case, when a dispute arose in regard to one of the turns of the game. The King was eager, but his opponent would not yield, and the courtiers around maintained a respectful silence. At that moment, the Count de Grammont was seen entering the apartment, and the King immediately exclaimed, "Come hither, Grammont, and decide this dispute between us."

"Your Majesty is in the wrong," replied the Count immediately, without waiting to hear more.

"How can you say I am in the wrong," cried the King, "before you hear the point in dispute?"

"Why, Sire," replied the Count, "if the matter had been even doubtful, all these gentlemen who stand round silent, would have decided in your favour long ago."

It was not only on such occasions, however, that the King displayed the same equitable spirit as in the question of domain. During the war of 1691, while the Duke of Savoy was ranged amongst the adversaries of France, the large revenues of his

mother, in France, were seized by the King, and at the treaty of peace there was no stipulation made that Louis should refund.

In March 1697, however, Louis caused the sums received to be accurately calculated, and restored the whole amount to the duchess, declaring that it was but an act of justice, as against her he had no cause of complaint. In the preceding year also, 1696, the Duchess of Nemours entered into a suit at law with the King, regarding a part of the domain. The property in question was again a very large one, but in this instance the judges decided without difficulty in favour of the King. The duchess, it is true, could very well afford to lose the suit, but she had pleaded eagerly and strenuously against the monarch; and immediately the decision was made known to the King, he remitted the suit, declaring that he did so because she had acted with sincerity and good faith.

We might dwell long upon such acts, for there are a multitude of them recorded; but perhaps there were no circumstances in which Louis appeared to greater advantage than in all his relations with the unfortunate James II, and likewise during the sickness or at the death of various members of his own family; and he had but too frequent cause to display the firmness of his mind, and the strength of his affection on such occasions.

To the exiled King of England, and that sove-

reign's unhappy wife, the whole demeanour of Louis was characterized by the most delicate, the most touching generosity; and the formal marks of respect, which might be supposed to be rendered less to the fallen prince than to the kingly dignity with which they were both invested, were accompanied by innumerable instances of small but soothing courtesies, which must have sprung from the heart of the man.

Contagious diseases of a very virulent nature frequently attacked the members of the monarch's court, but we find that he never avoided, from any consideration of the personal risk that he ran, the execution of those duties which many a private individual would have dreaded. Neither did he at all shrink from the aspect of sickness and death, though affording to kings, from their very elevation, a more striking lesson than the same scenes can give to other men; showing them the end of all their power, the nullity of all their greatness, and bringing home to their hearts the dark and gloomy warnings of the tomb, in the midst of pomp, and luxury, and enjoyment.

Anxious to lead in every external token of piety, Louis constantly turned back with the sacrament when he met it on the way to the house of any dying person. On one occasion, if not more, he accompanied it into the very chamber of death; but the most striking instance recorded of his voluntarily staying to witness the close of life, was in the case of

his son's wife, to whom he seems to have continued strongly attached to the very last. She died apparently of consumption, evidently aggravated by the want of skill in her medical attendants, and Louis and the Dauphin were both summoned to her chamber a short time before she expired. Some of the other persons present, seeing the approach of the last struggle, endeavoured to persuade Louis to quit the room, but the monarch replied "It is right that we should see how our fellow-creatures die," and he remained with her till life was extinct. When all was over, he took the Dauphin by the hand, and led him away from the sad spectacle, not forgetting, however, to point out the lesson as he went. "You see," he said, according to the report of an eye-witness, "you see what becomes of the greatness of this world. Lo! that which you and I have to expect. God grant us grace to end our days as holily."

A number of other deaths in the royal family, and even that of the son to whom he then spoke, preceded the decease of the King himself; but on every occasion, though more than once moved to shed tears, he behaved with calm and dignified firmness, making no display of his grief, and conquering it as soon as possible, but still feeling it deeply and evidently.

A strange contrast is afforded indeed, which we must necessarily notice, between the King's conduct on these occasions, and that of Madame de Main-

tenon. Her abandoning the King himself on his death-bed, has often been pointed out with wonder and disgust; but the same, we find, was always the case in regard to those towards whom she affected to be attached. On the death of the Dauphine, for whom she had always appeared to entertain the highest affection, although it had been long expected, and she could not doubt that a few hours would bring the event about, she was at St. Cyr, as on the occasion of the death of the King.

Afterwards, in 1712, the Duchess of Burgundy, the wife of the King's grandson, was seized with the scarlet fever, and her husband himself was attacked immediately afterwards by the same illness. The King attended upon the duchess constantly till her death, but I can find no trace of Madame de Maintenon having paid her the slightest attention. The same was the case with the Duke of Burgundy, and the monarch scarcely left him during his illness. The eyes of both had not long been closed, when their eldest son also died of the same disease; and of that branch of the Bourbon family none remained but the Duc d'Anjou, a feeble but beautiful child, who survived all his immediate relations, and ruled over France as Louis XV.

In all these events the character of Louis shines forth in a fine and pleasing point of view, displaying many amiable qualities, as a parent and a friend; tempered by the firmness and dignity of the monarch

and the Christian. The character of Madame de Maintenon, however, does not appear to improve, as we watch her progress from youth to age; and the selfishness, which was probably the grand motive of all her actions, by habitual rule became despotic towards the close of her existence. That selfishness, however, was of a prudent and a thoughtful, rather than of a grasping and eager character. There is reason to believe that for various purposes she sought to render almost all the ministers of Louis XIV. dependant upon her, and that through her influence with them, as well as with the King, she exerted a great, though not very apparent power over everything in France. Nevertheless, she secured to herself and to her relations but a very small portion of all the wealth that was squandered around her, and while with prudent fidelity she continued to conceal to the last her marriage with the King, she sought for none of her connexions those distinctions which she might at once have commanded. Her brother, the Count d'Aubigné, died a lieutenant-general of France, when a word from his sister would have given him the rank of Marshal; but at the same time there can be no doubt that he received considerable sums of money obtained in secret.

To the family of Vilette, some small gifts were made by the King, but no great promotion or distinction marked them from the rest of his subjects, and Madame de Maintenon's niece, who was

married to the son of the Maréchal de Noailles, was the only one of her relations for whom she obtained any large portion of the King's bounty. To her, upon her marriage, were given two hundred thousand francs, nominally bestowed by Madame de Maintenon, but in reality proceeding from the coffers of the King. We will not pause to investigate the latent motives of this disinterestedness. Her moderation was either a proof of wisdom, or a proof of virtue; and, if there be a distinction between the two, proceeding from the motives which mingle with the stream of action at its source, there is but one eye probably which can distinguish exactly the line that separates them.

In painting the character of Louis XIV. the mixture of evil and good is remarkable; but where the monarch suffered himself to be led by his vanity or his passions into wrong or pitiful actions, it was, in general, on occasions that gave no opportunity for that discrimination of what is great, which marked the rest of his course through life. We must pass over his gross and glaring licentiousness, in which his appreciation of greatness failed him entirely, being blinded, it would seem, by temptation and passion, and led to believe that by external magnificence he could render even crime and folly grand and dignified. But that which is more perhaps to his dishonour as a monarch, than even his personal vices, is the toleration, we might say, encouragement, of the licentiousness of others.

The honours and distinctions with which Louis was induced to treat not only Madame Dufresnoi, the avowed mistress of Louvois, but many other persons of whose conduct there could be no doubt, contributed, of course, greatly to spread through the whole of society in France that spirit of general licentiousness which long characterized the nation. Those ladies, indeed, of whom the monarch could have no high opinion from their easy compliance with his own wishes, were placed in the highest stations of the court, and about the persons of his nearest female relations; and, whether to his honour or not may be judged, Louis always showed immense toleration for those errors in which he participated. The crimes attributed to his brother likewise passed without examination, but the same lenity could certainly not be required at his hands where other persons were involved.

Louis, however, was by nature lenient, and all his acts, with very few exceptions, tended to mitigate, rather than aggravate, the severity of the law. Very little bloodshed by the hands of the executioner stained the annals of his reign; and even in the case of the Chevalier de Rohan, he would willingly have pardoned the criminal, had not the necessity of an example been strenuously urged upon him by all his ministers. A very short time before the execution of that weak traitor, his resolution was shaken by an artifice of Crequi. The King being about to visit the theatre, ordered the

play of the Horatii to be performed, but Créqui, instead of obeying the directions he had received, commanded the actors, in Louis's name, to perform the tragedy of Cinna. When the curtain rose, the King exclaimed "I ordered the Horatii, and this is Cinna!"

"Sire," replied Créqui boldly, "Cinna is better suited to the present moment." Louis was moved by the pathos of the scene, and it required all the efforts of sterner advisers to prevent him from sending a pardon to the gloomy walls of the Bastille.

The same spirit of lenity marked Louis' conduct in more general transactions, and we find that in the course of this war he changed the punishment of death, which had been formerly awarded to deserters, into hard labour. It must be remembered too that his army was supplied by volunteers, and that he was the strongest advocate of that only noble, just, and equitable way of recruiting the forces necessary for the defence of the state.

Notwithstanding the vast and exhausting wars in which he was engaged, Louis set his face resolutely against all those measures for supplying reinforcements to his armies by corrupt or compulsory means, which his ministers were inclined not perhaps to adopt, but to connive at. In the course of the wars which ended with the peace of Ryswick, it was discovered that a number of persons, employed in recruiting, took means to entrap young men, and to shut them up in a state which

might be considered as one of imprisonment, in various houses in Paris, which acquired the name of *fours*, or ovens, from whence they were marched off, when collected in sufficient numbers, to join the army for which they had been enlisted. At this system there can be very little doubt that Louvois connived; but some courtier, more bold, or more imprudent than the rest, made Louis acquainted with the fact, and he instantly gave orders in a manner which could not be disobeyed, not only to put a stop to all such practices for the future, but to punish with the utmost severity those who had been guilty thereof.

The ravages committed in the Palatinate have cast a deep stain upon Louis' reputation for mildness and humanity: nor were these ravages confined to one campaign; for the scenes of horror which were perpetrated by the army under Turenne were trifling when compared with those afterwards enacted by the forces of Duras. That stain must remain upon the memory of Louis; for though these terrible transactions took place solely by order of Louvois, yet, as we have before remarked, the King who suffers his authority to be so abused, becomes chargeable with no slight portion of the crime. But in making this acknowledgment, we must not omit to show, by the last act of the tragedy—which preceded only a short time the death of Louvois—that Louis was throughout opposed to the cruelty of his minister, and only

submitted unwillingly to the instigations of one in whom he had been accustomed to place the most unbounded confidence. It was contrary both to his wishes and his judgment that these acts were committed, if we may believe the account of almost every contemporary historian; and every fresh instance of cruelty to which he was called upon to consent, increased the indignant opposition of the monarch.

At length, after Manheim and Heidelberg had been taken, and all the beautiful country lying under the Bergstrasse had been ravaged from end to end; after three or four considerable towns, more than fifty castles, and an immense number of villages and boroughs had been burnt to the ground, Louvois proposed to the King that the large and important city of Treves should also be destroyed. Louis refused his consent, and Louvois argued with him and urged him in vain; but the minister, though fearful of pressing the matter further at the time on account of the signs of indignation which the King displayed, knew that by importunity and argument he could frequently overcome the King's resolutions, and returning after a few days he told the monarch that having clearly perceived that nothing but conscientious scruples had prevented him from taking a step so necessary as the burning of Treves, he had determined to bring the moral and religious responsibility upon himself, and had consequently sent off a courier on his own authority with an order to destroy that city.

The King's rage was now so fearfully excited that, forgetting all his usual dignity of demeanour, he started up and would have knocked down the minister with the fire-irons, if Madame de Maintenon had not cast herself in the way while Louvois hastened to escape by the door. "Send off another courier instantly," shouted the King, as he made his escape. "If he arrive not in time, and they burn a single house, your head shall answer for it."

Louvois, it would seem, had told his master a falsehood. No courier had really been sent; but he was now compelled to go through the form of despatching another courier, apparently charged with a counter order, for the purpose of satisfying the King.

To all who approached him, Louis was kind and gentle, and often by his generosity delivered the members of his family and his court from the consequences of their own imprudence. He paid the debts of his brother, though amounting to a very large sum; the debts of his wife, amounting to three hundred thousand francs, had been paid before. The Duke of Rochefaucault, who had been long greatly favoured by the monarch, had become considerably embarrassed, notwithstanding all that he possessed at court. Finding that he applied for no assistance, Louis mentioned the subject of his debts, always a delicate topic for a King to touch upon, and added, "Why do you not speak to your

friends ?” The after bounties of the King showed that he was the principal of those friends to whom he alluded.

Having now sufficiently dwelt upon the character of Louis himself, though there may be some anecdotes concerning the latter portion of his life which remain to be treated upon hereafter, we must now turn our attention to the principal personages who appeared at his court between the years 1685 and 1697. The first of these in rank, if not in importance, was James II. King of England, dethroned by his son-in-law, and a fugitive in France.

Long before the expulsion of the Stuart family, the approaching events in England had been apparent ; and the Count de Lauzun, who, after an imprisonment of many years, still remained an exile from the court, received permission to go over to England in order to offer his services to the British monarch. All that the Count could do, however, was to conduct the youthful Prince of Wales, and Mary of Modena, the Queen of the ill-advised King, in safety to the shores of France. Their safe arrival at Calais was immediately notified to Louis, and that monarch instantly sent off messengers to the port to welcome the English Queen, bearing with them a letter to Lauzun written in his own hand, revoking the order of exile which had been pronounced against him.

Every kindness and attention were shown to the fugitive Queen of England. A palace was pre-

pared for her, and Louis himself, by the most delicate care, did all that he could to console her under her affliction. On the arrival of James himself, which speedily followed, Louis accompanied that Prince to the Queen, and entered first to announce his approach, saying, "Madam, I bring you a man that you will be right glad to see." Nor did the generous friendship of Louis know any diminution. In the midst of his own reverses, the misfortunes of his people, and the calamities of his own family, he never forgot the exiled King of England. He aided him with men, with money, and with ships; he received him with constant kindness when he returned from defeat and disaster; and he assisted him in every effort which afforded the slightest probability of success. The battle of the Boyne, however, and the defeat of La Hogue, were decisive of the success of William III. On the first of those occasions, James, aided by French troops and Irish levies, and supported strenuously by many gallant gentlemen from amongst those who had been his subjects, was totally defeated, though he had remained months undisturbed to make all his arrangements; and on the second, Tourville, the most gallant and distinguished naval officer which France then possessed, misled by false information of Jacobite movements in the English fleet, and compelled by superior orders to combat at any risk, attacked a British force superior to himself, and suffered, in consequence, one of the

most disastrous defeats on record. These two engagements, as we have said, sealed the fate of James, but nevertheless, Louis, though worsted in fighting his battles, and though he certainly could not esteem the weak and selfish bigot which James had become, found in the misfortunes of the British Prince motives for friendship and kindness which remained in full force to the last hour of the exile's life.

Having mentioned the name of Tourville, though not, strictly speaking, one of the courtiers of Louis, for his appearance at court was very rare, this great officer may be as well noticed here amongst those which distinguished this period of the French Monarch's reign. He was a man of noble family, born at the chateau of Tourville, near Coutance, and entered early the naval service of France. His name was Anne Hilarion de Cotentin, Count de Tourville. He distinguished himself in almost every action in which he was engaged, and acquired not only the esteem and respect of his own country, but of the very enemies against whom he fought. In his demeanour he was modest, tranquil, and retiring; but that which seems to have been most remarkable in him was his intimate acquaintance with every part of the service in which he had been brought up, from the duties of the admiral down to that of ship's carpenter. He died in the year 1701, a few months after he had received the baton of Marshal of France, I think, in his fifty-ninth year.

This was the second great naval commander that Louis lost towards the end of his reign, though the well-known Duquesne died twelve years before Tourville. Duquesne was a man of less scope of mind, perhaps, than Tourville, but there was a sailor-like frankness and determination about him which had a great effect upon the men under his command. We have already noticed the occasions on which he was opposed to De Ruyter on the coast of Sicily, and he also commanded the fleet at the bombardment of Algiers and Genoa ; but Duquesne had the misfortune—for such it might be called under the rule of Louis XIV.—of being a Protestant, and the monarch one day gave him to understand that much greater honours might be his were it not for that obstacle. “Sire,” replied the old Admiral, “in fighting for your Majesty I never considered whether you were of another religion from me or not.”

Louis was neither admonished nor offended by the rebuke ; but continued to love and esteem him, and bestowed upon him a beautiful estate in the neighbourhood of Etampes, which he erected into a marquisate in his favour. He died at Paris in 1688, and his son, whom he had educated in the Protestant religion, was compelled to give his father burial in private, if not in secret. That son afterwards quitted a country in which no Protestant could remain in safety and repose, and carrying the bones of his father with him into Switzerland, he wrote upon his tomb, “Holland erected a monument to

De Ruyter, and to his conqueror France refused a little earth."

On the characters of such men as Catinat, Boufflers, Villars, De Lorges, Villeroy, Tallard, and others, who were principally distinguished as commanders, it will be unnecessary to pause, as we have given elsewhere in this work an account of their military career. There were various persons, however, at the court, whose characters are worthy of remark, either as offering a strong contrast to the spirit of the age, or exaggerating that spirit, and leading the way from it to that of an after epoch. Amongst those who stand out most prominently from the picture of the reign of Louis XIV. by their dissimilarity from the rest of his courtiers was the famous Duke of Montausier, who had been appointed by the King governor to the Dauphin. We find him stigmatised by some of those who probably suffered from meddling with him in an impertinent manner, "as a bunch of nettles which stung on whichever side they were taken," but Montausier was in reality a man of plain, simple, and rigid principles, somewhat phlegmatic in character, and, perhaps, a little cynical in disposition, but still noble, generous, and elevated in all his feelings, though frequently irritated so as to say severe things by the impertinence and frivolity of the court in which he lived. On one occasion, in a dispute between him and his young pupil, the Prince imagined that his governor had struck him.

and exclaimed, with fury and indignation, "How, sir! do you strike me? Bring me my pistols."

"Bring his highness's pistols," said the Duke coolly; and causing them immediately to be given to the Dauphin, he added, "Now, sir, see what you are going to do with them." The Dauphin was struck and touched; and when, after having finished his education, Montausier gave up his post, he did it with these words, "Sir, if you are an honest man you will love me, if you are not you will hate me; and I shall console myself."

On the occasion of the taking of Philipsburg by the Dauphin, Montausier wrote to him a very different letter from those which the Prince received from other persons at the court. "I do not compliment you, Monseigneur," he said, "upon the taking of Philipsburg: you had an army, an excellent park of artillery, and Vauban. I rejoice with you that you have shown yourself liberal, generous, and humane, putting forward the services of others and forgetting your own. It is upon this that I have to compliment you."

Two anecdotes are told of the Duke of Montausier which shows in a remarkable manner the cool and bitter contempt with which he treated the flatterers of his royal pupil. On one occasion the Dauphin was firing at a mark, and fired very far from the target. The Marquis of Crequi had been to fire, and though an excellent shot, his ball went a foot farther from the mark than that of the

Dauphin. "Ah, little serpent," cried Montausier, "you ought to be strangled." On another occasion, Mademoiselle de Scudery, who never lost an opportunity of offering incense to the royal family, sent some verses to the Dauphine on her husband's return from one of his campaigns. The verses ended as follows :—

"Dites-nous seulement quelles sont les plus grandes,
Les douceurs de la gloire, ou celles de l'amour?"

The Dauphine replied that they should ask her husband, not her ; and on the following morning Montausier drew the curtains of the Dauphin's bed, and said, "I come, Sir, for an answer to Mademoiselle de Scudery's question."

Such proceedings obtained for Montausier, in the midst of a false and licentious court, the reputation of a misanthrope, and some of the courtiers, probably imagining that they could mortify a man who did not scruple on any occasion to mortify them, gave him to understand that the play of "The Misanthrope," lately produced by Molière, had been written to satirize himself. After hearing this several times repeated, Montausier went to see the play performed, and, on coming out of the theatre, only remarked that he should be very well pleased to resemble the misanthrope of Molière. It was not however by speeches alone, that Montausier showed the firm and upright probity of his character. Scarcely had he been appointed, as a reward

for his services, to the government of Normandy, when he learned that the plague had broken out in that province. All his relations and friends sought eagerly to dissuade him from plunging into the midst of the infection ; but Montausier coolly continued his preparations, replying, “ For my part, I hold that Governors, like Bishops, are bound to reside.”

Another celebrated person at the court of Louis XIV. was the famous Chief President Harlay, a man descended from ancestors of the highest probity, from Achilles de Harlay and the well-known Christopher de Thou. It would seem by the accounts of many contemporaries that the cynicism which was natural to his disposition was rather increased by affectation than diminished by the habits of a court. Foolish people very often imagine that in imitating the small defects which frequently accompany great virtues, they acquire the virtues themselves, and cunning people very often assume the severity of stern probity, knowing that, with more than one half of the world, the occasional adjunct will pass for the great quality itself. There is considerable reason to believe that Harlay was not quite so upright a man as he appeared, and St. Simon recounts one trait of his conduct towards Ruvigny, which is certainly by no means to his honour.* It is but fair, however, to say, that

* Ruvigny, who was a protestant, was forced to retire from France on account of his religion, and on his departure left a

St. Simon was his enemy, and thought that he had been treated unjustly by him.

It is clear that Harlay was a most profound lawyer, and also that he was thoroughly versed in almost all branches of belles lettres. He was revered and obeyed by the Parliament, all the younger members of which trembled at his very look, so wild and cutting and daring were the sarcasms and abuse to which he would give way when offended. Were we to take the word of St. Simon, "he was without any effectual honour; without morality in private, without any but external probity, even without humanity; in a word, a perfect hypocrite; without faith or law, without God and without soul; a cruel husband, a barbarous father, a tyrannical brother, a friend only to himself; malignant by nature, taking a pleasure in insulting, outraging, and overwhelming, and never in his life having lost an opportunity of so doing. One might make a volume of his sallies, and every one the more cutting, because they were infinitely full of wit—wit naturally inclined that way, and always so much master of itself as never to risk anything of which he might have to repent. In exterior he was a little man, strong but thin, with a lozenge-shaped countenance, a large aquiline

large sum under the private care of Harlay. That person, however, disclosed the fact to the King, who declared the sum confiscated, and gave it to Harlay, who accepted it without scruple. Such is the account of St. Simon.

nose, fine eyes, speaking, piercing, which only looked at one by stealth, but which, fixed upon a client or upon a magistrate, were fitted to make him sink into the earth."

In another place, St. Simon says that Harlay's eyes were "like those of a vulture, which seemed to devour the objects they fixed on, and to pierce the very walls." We have given the preceding account from St. Simon, more as a specimen of the method of painting to be found in the works of that extraordinary man himself, than because we fully believe the truth of the portrait; but before we speak more of St. Simon himself, we must give one or two traits of the manners of Harlay.

A lady, the daughter of Bussy Rabutin, had married a M. de Montataire: both proved extraordinary talkers, and both excessively fond of law. On one occasion they had gone to the audience of the Chief President, who, coming to them in their turn, listened to the husband, who began to speak. The wife, however, almost instantly interrupted him, and took the narration upon herself. After listening a considerable time, Harlay stopped her, and, turning to her husband, asked "Is this lady your wife, sir?"

"Yes, sir," replied Montataire, not a little surprised. "How I grieve for you, sir," said Harlay, lifting up his shoulders with an air of the most profound compassion; and then turning on his heel he left them.

On another occasion the Duc de Rohan, not the most placable personage of the court, went to visit him on some business, accompanied by his steward, and going away discontented, insisted upon Harlay not seeing him to his carriage, as was his general custom. Thinking that he had got rid of him, the duke, in going down stairs, poured forth volleys of invectives upon the Chief President; but the steward suddenly perceived that Harlay was following them, and told his master, who instantly turned round, and besought the magistrate with assumed politeness not to come any farther. "Oh, sir," replied Harlay in the most complimentary tone, "your conversation is so charming, that it is impossible to quit you," and he persisted in seeing him to his carriage.

At another time two gentlemen, brothers, who had bought recently two estates, took, as was common, the name of those places, and on visiting the Chief President, gave the new names to the servant. No sooner did Harlay see them than he began bowing to the ground with every appearance of the utmost reverence; after which raising himself up in a moment, as if he suddenly recognized them, he exclaimed, in the words commonly used at masquerades, "Masks, I know you!" and instantly turned his back upon them.

Another story, told by St. Simon, shall conclude these anecdotes of Harlay, inasmuch as it is not a little to his honour, though still indicative

of the cynical humour of the man. The Duchess de la Ferté, having demanded an audience of him, turned upon her steps with as much ill humour as the Duc de Rohan, talking to some one who had accompanied her, and calling the Chief President “an old monkey.” Harlay heard every word, as he followed to conduct her to her carriage, (a civility he uniformly rendered to all persons of distinction,) but he took not the slightest notice; and very shortly after the cause of the duchess was tried before him. He decided at once in her favour, and she immediately afterwards hurried to thank him,—a practice as common in those corrupt ages, as for the parties to a cause to visit the judge beforehand, and endeavour to prejudice him in regard to the case. Harlay received the torrent of thanks with which she loaded him with every appearance of the utmost humility and respect, and when she had done replied, before every one present, “Madame, I am delighted that an old monkey should have it in his power to oblige an old ape;” and then bowing to the ground with profound gravity, he immediately proceeded to conduct her to her carriage, amidst the smothered laughter of every one present.

St. Simon himself, one of the greatest caricaturists that ever existed, would by no means have furnished a bad subject for a pen like his own, full of malice, full of wit, full of bigotry, and full of credulity: with a fund of keen penetration into the character of others, and a total ignorance of his

own, he commemorated, in an after age, the vices and follies of his own epoch, and, ignorant that he put his own head forward in front of the puppet-show, made the rest of the characters play their parts in a manner but too like the life. There were evidently two recommendations in the eyes of St. Simon, either of which was sure to procure for any anecdote a friendly reception: the one was wit, the other was malignity; and to a certain degree his talent for description and narration was a misfortune to all with whom he was acquainted; for to those anecdotes, which he received upon the slightest possible testimony, he gave a degree of identity which incorporated them for ever with the history of the persons to whom they referred. However improbable was the tale, however wild, however irreconcilable were the facts with the character of the person of whom they were told, the manner, the language, the turn of thought were all so happily adapted by the narrator to the habits of those of whom he spoke, that it was scarcely possible to believe that one did not see the individuals themselves, only acting in a way that they never would have done. He was like an enchanter, gifted with the power of calling up the precise images of other people, and making them act according to the dictates of his own malignity. With all this, St. Simon, so keen to every thing defective or ridiculous in others, was full of the most petty and contemptible pride, and the most trifling stickler

for etiquette presented by the court of Louis XIV. It may easily be supposed that he was loved by very few, and possessed no great influence of any kind till after the death of the monarch.

Another person, on whom we must pause for a moment, is the well-known Count de Boulainvilliers, celebrated as an historian, and also for his various knowledge. Learned, wise, philosophical, he had one or two weaknesses, some of which mingled with and impaired his historical works, and some of which served only to amuse the pitiful and unthinking of his own day, and to afford a strange example even to the present, of how many feeble points there may be found in strong and powerful intellects. He was famous for his belief in and practice of judicial astrology, and while shut up at a distance from the capital, he divided his time between deep and useful studies, and the vain dreams which excited his imagination. Not a few persons in France, however, we must remember, gave as much credit to the science as he did himself, though perhaps they did not so boldly announce their opinions.

Many of the calculations of Boulainvilliers are reported to have been remarkably verified, especially that concerning the death of the King, which he predicted within two days, though he had not seen the monarch for a considerable time, and Louis had not yet been seized with the illness which terminated his existence when the prediction was made. In several

instances he was mistaken, and when the case, he had always the candour to acknowledge it. In other respects he is described as simple, gentle, and humble, though confident in his own powers, having a profound knowledge of many things, which he explained willingly and distinctly to all who sought for information, and adding to a number of other good qualities, that quality of almost all great minds, true modesty without bashfulness. The most extraordinary of his predictions was that regarding the death of his only son, and of himself, both of which occurred in the year, the month, the day, and the hour that he had foretold. As the time approached which he had designated as that of his own death, he prepared himself with the utmost calmness and courage for the event, fulfilled all the duties of his religion, and showed that, though he had the most perfect conviction of the truth of his prophecy, he in no degree brought about its accomplishment by anything like fear.

The Duc de Beauvilliers was another remarkable person at the court of France; upright, pious, and generous; but his character offers too few remarkable points to render it necessary for us to dwell upon it long. He was wise, moderate, and gentle, yet firm and dignified when needful; but though much to be admired and respected, and though distinguished from the rest of Louis' court by virtues and good qualities, there were few marks

of originality about him to distinguish him from other good and upright men. His conduct towards the King, on being appointed President of the Council of Finance, and Louis' behaviour to him in return, we have already noticed, and it only remains to be said that, in exercising the functions with which he was invested, he displayed a firm and temperate boldness, which perhaps had not been expected from one who was naturally so gentle in character.

We will not pause any longer upon the courtiers which figured at the court of Louis XIV, but will proceed to notice some of the principal events which took place in the interior of France, and trace out their progress to the end of that monarch's reign. It has justly been observed that every thing which was great in the government of Louis, took place during the earlier part of his reign, and the latter part was replete with disasters. It was towards the end of the war terminated by the peace of Ryswick, that the finances of France fell into a state, as it appeared, of irretrievable embarrassment. We have already mentioned the establishment of the capitation tax, and the unwillingness of Pontchartrain to adopt it; but, in the year 1696, the same minister was obliged to have recourse to a measure which, though not so oppressive to the people, was more humiliating to the crown. This was the sale of letters of nobility, of which five hundred were bought at the sum of two thousand crowns each. A thousand

other pitiful taxes, as well as the remarkable sacrifice, which we have noticed elsewhere, of all the plate in the country, displayed too strongly the shifts to which the minister was driven; but it was during the War of the Succession that still more ruinous means of raising money were employed.

In 1710, the tithe, which Pontchartrain had rejected, was adopted by one of his successors, after having previously had recourse to the establishment of a paper currency at a moment of great disaster. But in regard to the circulation of the notes which were now issued, one of the most extraordinary and monstrous errors was committed with which a minister was ever reproached. The notes which were issued by the state were actually rejected at the treasury, and the government absolutely insisted that the people should receive and circulate a sort of money which the King refused to receive himself. This absurdity was followed by things equally glaring; and the creation of offices, ridiculous even by their very name, which were all to be sold for the profit of the state, put the last stroke to a system in which the lamentable ran into the laughable.

In 1709, the finance government of Chamillart was found to be so inefficient, so weak, and so completely sunk in public estimation, that it was not difficult for Madame de Maintenon, who had been long labouring to overthrow him, to induce Louis XIV. to command him to resign. The person

charged to inform him of the King's determination was the Duc de Beauvilliers, between whom and Chamillart there were ties both of friendship and alliance. Beauvilliers was in the greatest distress at the orders that he received, and endeavoured, as far as possible, to excuse himself from executing them. Louis, however, insisted, and only permitted Beauvilliers to take with him his brother-in-law, the Duc de Chevreuse. Their interview with Chamillart is too remarkable, and too much to the honour of that minister, to be passed over without notice. The two dukes found him alone in his cabinet, labouring to prepare a memorial which the King had demanded; but the anxiety and distress visible in their countenances at once showed him that something had gone wrong. "What is the matter, gentlemen?" said he, with a countenance perfectly serene: "if what you have to say refers to me alone, speak, for I have long been prepared for everything." With grief and difficulty they told him the whole. "The King is master," he replied, without the slightest change of countenance; "I have tried to serve him to the best of my power;—I hope that another may serve him more to his satisfaction and more happily." He then folded up the memoir that he had just finished for the King, added a page and a half of respectful thanks for the bounties and promises which Louis now showered upon him to soften the pain of his dismissal, ar-

ranged his papers, left the keys of his office to be given to his successor, and set out for his country house without one apparent regret.

The joy of the people on the dismissal of Chamillart was extreme, for, forgetting various important services which by his activity and promptitude he had rendered to the state, they hated him as much for misfortunes with which he had nothing to do, as for the errors which he had really committed. He was succeeded in office by Desmarets in 1709; but scarcity, poverty, unsuccessful war, a people irritated beyond all forbearance, a monarch whose energies though not gone were subdued, and a land utterly exhausted of resources, was all that Desmarets found surrounding him upon his entrance into office. He was the nephew of the famous Colbert; but Colbert himself, though the greatest architect that ever lived of a nation's prosperity, could hardly have constructed success out of materials such as these.

The public debt daily increased, and also the public expenditure. The continued tampering with the currency produced its usual ruinous effects upon commerce, and a still more ruinous effect upon the finances of the kingdom. The commercial prosperity which had grown up under the fostering care of Colbert, had long been done away, but it was reserved for his nephew to see a rich and abundant land, fertile in every resource, reduced to a lower pitch of misery than even that which the civil and

foreign wars of the regency of Anne of Austria had produced. Of course it would be out of place here to enter into all the details of the finances of Louis XIV.; but the state of depression to which the revenue and the commerce of France were reduced under Mazarin,—their rise, increase, prosperity, and activity under Colbert, and under the pacific system which he advocated,—their decline, fall, and utter ruin under the ambitious and disastrous enterprises of Louis XIV.—offer to monarchs and statesmen, and nations, one of the most instructive and awful lessons in the history of the world.

To the other misfortunes of France was added, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, a long and determined revolt in one of her Southern Provinces.

We have abstained in this work, as far as possible, from speaking of any of the various religious dissensions of France, wherever it was not absolutely necessary, and wherever the passing controversies of ecclesiastics upon points of doubt and mystery, the gloomy persecutions of bigotry, or the more violent movements of fanaticism, produced none of those grand results which affect the fate of nations. The quarrels of the Jansenists and the Jesuits; the expulsion of a few men of talents and piety from France; the persecution of Fenelon for the encouragement of doctrines somewhat wild and fanatical; the imprison-

ment of Madame Guyon for doctrines which, however wild, would soon have cured themselves, and could have done no great harm even had they been adopted by a considerable sect—affect little the general reader, and have produced no important effect of any kind in the history of the world. Not so, however, the persecution of the Huguenots, which drove hundreds of thousands of the most industrious workmen and the most respectable citizens from the soil of France, which carried new arts and manufactures to other countries, and which put the most lamentable check upon the commerce of Louis' dominions. Not so, either, the revolt of the Cevennes, which embarrassed greatly Louis' movements during the early part of the war of the succession, when England, Germany, and Holland, were firmly united against him, and Spain, divided between two parties, was the object struggled for between France and the Empire.

It is scarcely possible to imagine that a revolt of such importance as to divide the forces of Louis, and act as a serious diversion in favour of the allies against France, should be chiefly supported by the madness of a few fanatics; but such was the case in Languedoc. In that part of the country, remote from any great capital, unprovided with the means of instruction, the people were at that time extremely ignorant, wild, and barbarous. Of course, this is the state most favourable to fanaticism; and the warm imaginations

of the South rendered the Cevennes prompt to receive any fanciful and superstitious impressions. The persecution of the Protestants at the time of the revocation of the edict of Nantes had left deep and dangerous feelings behind in many parts of the country. The minds of men brooded over their wrongs, and the necessity of restraining their thoughts only rendered them more intense and perilous. In this state then some persons, principally, it would seem, Protestant clergymen, fell into the very common error of believing themselves prophets; and inspired with all the devotion and zeal which the firm conviction of supernatural endowments afford, they promulgated their own opinions in defiance of the tyrannical laws of the land in which they lived, fully satisfied with their own righteousness, and feeling certain of eternal reward for their sufferings on earth. There can be no doctrines, however absurd, which will not meet with a certain number of zealous supporters, and there can be no doubt that endemic diseases of the mind are no less common than epidemic diseases of the body.

The prophets, therefore, found numerous followers in their own neighbourhood, and amongst the rest many gentlemen of considerable property, one of the most remarkable amongst whom was a person of the name of Rochegude, who entered into strict correspondence with various Huguenots in Holland, both Dutch and French, and a constant

communication was established between Languedoc and the United Provinces at the very time that war was going on between France and the latter country. The sect, in the mean time, went on and prospered ; and two remarkable fanatics sprung up, named Jurien and de Serre, who soon threw their followers into all the ecstasies of religious insanity. They met upon the tops of the mountains, they prophesied, they fell into convulsions ; and they even laboured hard to perform miracles, but in vain. Added to these were soon a number of the Huguenot ministers, who had been exiled from France. Driven from one state of fanaticism to another by the scourge of persecution, they returned to Languedoc, calling themselves apostles, and adopting, in many of its most extravagant forms, the doctrines of the prophetical fanatics, The sect spread, and it was soon followed by a collision with the government.

The particulars of the transactions which now occurred are very difficult to be met with unmingled with religious and party feelings, or unperverted by the prejudiced statements of friends and opponents. In what I am going to say, therefore, in regard to the commencement of actual hostilities, I speak with great diffidence, as it seems to me that all the wells of information on this subject are poisoned by prejudices, and I have not the means of purifying the stream. A clergyman of the name of Brousson was one of the first

victims to fanatical zeal. He had for a time emigrated to Holland, but returning to Languedoc, taught boldly his doctrines, and formed a project, we are told, for introducing the troops of England and Savoy into the Province. A part of his correspondence with the Duke of Schomberg was intercepted by the government. He was arrested, tried, and condemned, not upon the charge of teaching contrary to law the doctrines of reformed religion, but upon that of high treason. Such is the general statement made by French historians, and there can be no doubt that treason was the pretence, if not the motive of his condemnation. The sentence pronounced upon him, however, would seem to show that religious feelings mingled greatly in the proceedings against him. He was condemned to be broken on the wheel. Now that punishment for many years had been applied alone to crimes of a religious character. The punishment for high treason committed by a person of noble family, as in his case, was decapitation; and even the attempts upon the life of Kings of France, which have been punished by the wheel, have been considered, I believe, rather in the light of parricide than of treason. He died with the constancy of a martyr, and his death increased the numbers and the zeal of his sect.

The fault of an enemy not only added greatly to the numbers of the fanatics, but drove them to acts of violence. Missionaries had been sent to the coun-

try for the purpose of effecting conversions, and the Abbé du Chaila was appointed inspector of the missions. This personage having some reason to suspect that the catholicism of two young ladies, the daughters of a newly converted gentleman, was likely to be shaken, obtained one of those infamous orders from the court which disgrace the whole of the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV, authorizing him to shut up the two young women in a convent; and he immediately proceeded to seize upon them. Instead, however, of conveying them to the convent, as, under any circumstances, it was his duty to have done, he carried them at once to his own house. Whether any evil purpose of another kind was attributed to him, justly or not justly, I cannot tell; but certain it is that the fanatics attacked the chateau of the Abbé, rescued the young ladies from his hands, and shot him on the spot: from that moment they may be considered to have been in actual revolt. They massacred the Catholic priests wherever they could find them, and endeavoured to revenge themselves upon Basville, intendant of the province, who had persecuted them from the commencement with the most merciless rigour, by hanging the collectors of the capitation tax with their rolls about their neck.

The cry now became one of no little importance, for it added to the zeal of fanaticism which raged in that part of the country alone, a motive of resistance which was likely to have been adopted by the

whole of France. This cry was "Liberty of conscience and *remission of taxes*." The fanaticism, however, served greatly by the excesses which it produced to neutralize the perilous tendency of these more reasonable demands; for many people who would have willingly given them support had they conducted resistance with moderation, turned from them with disgust and horror when they saw them exercise not alone upon the soldiers who fell into their power, but upon the unoffending priests of another religion, and on monks, who had taken no part in their persecution, all the most disgraceful cruelties that fanaticism could suggest. A large tract of country, however, was in their hands; many cities of great importance favoured and assisted them; a number of gentlemen possessed of fortified houses through the Cevennes and Languedoc supported them, either secretly or openly; and Holland, Genoa, and Savoy, contributed to give them direction and assistance. Thus, in the year 1703, a very dangerous nucleus for extensive rebellion was established in the South, adding the motive of real grievances to be redressed to the fanatical zeal which inspired and strengthened the original sect.

Louis XIV. now found that, although attacked by foreign enemies on every side, it was high time for him to employ some force of importance against the internal adversaries of his government. He, therefore, sent the Marquis of Montrevel, an officer of considerable distinction, to command in the dis-

turbed districts ; but Montrevel, on his arrival, found that the danger was much greater, and the revolt more extensive, than had been known at the court. The fanatics were already striking medals for themselves ; they had several printing presses at command ; and, in the skirmishes which took place, the troops of the King were frequently repulsed with loss. Such of the fanatics as were captured had been, and still were, treated with every sort of cruelty and brutality ; and these acts were, of course, retaliated upon the royal troops whenever they fell into the hands of their adversaries. The King's forces, however, in Languedoc, were by no means few in number. In January 1703, an officer of the name of Julien, originally a Savoyard, and who had greatly distinguished himself as a leader of partisans, was sent to Languedoc with two regiments of dragoons, and between three and four thousand infantry, and in the end of the same year twenty battalions more, with a strong park of artillery, were despatched to the aid of Montrevel. Nothing, however, was done to reduce the revolt, and, according to the account of Marshal Villars, the indiscriminate punishments which were employed by Julien, Montrevel, and Basville, not only increased the number of the insurgents, but made them fight with a degree of determination not to be found in men who had any other hope than in resistance unto death.

In the year 1704 Villars was appointed to com-

mand in Languedoc, and on setting out to take the command of the troops, he told the King, that with his permission he would use means entirely different from those already employed, and endeavour to end a war by kindness which had only been aggravated by harshness. The King consented at once, saying, that the Marshal might well believe he preferred the preservation of his people to their destruction. With this determination, and permission then, Villars set out. On arriving in the province, he found that the insurgents, now known by the name of Camisards, might be divided into three classes, which it was necessary to separate from each other. The first were honest, well-intentioned, and moderate people, who had been hurried into insurrection by various circumstances, but were never very zealous, and were now heartily tired of the contest. A second class was composed of the rabble of the country, who found in the insurrection a glorious opportunity of committing the crimes to which nature or habit prompted them. "A furious fanatic and debauched rabble," Villars declares, "crammed full of prophetesses." The third were the real, sincere, and insane fanatics, "upon whom," says Villars, "the fear of death has not the slightest effect."

Villars now, as he had announced, proceeded in a course directly opposite to that which had been formerly followed, and perseveringly joined gentleness to firmness. Wherever the Camisards were

found in arms, he pursued them with the utmost energy and determination. Those, however, who surrendered, he treated with gentleness and kindness, assembling them whenever there were a sufficient number, and advising them either to sell their goods and expatriate themselves, in order to follow their religious opinions unmolested, or to remain upon a promise given by them to be tranquil and peaceable for the future, guaranteed by the surety of two well-known Catholics. His measures of severity, however, he acknowledges, succeeded better than those of gentleness; but the combination of the two proved effectual in the end; and the revolt, as far as it was really dangerous, may be said to have terminated by the chief commander of the rebel troops, named Cavalier, treating with Villars, on finding himself deserted by a number of his followers. It was arranged that he should receive a command in the French army, with the agreement that he was to raise certain regiments which were to have permission to exercise freely their religion, and to be treated in all respects as foreign troops in the pay of France. Although sudden succour received from Holland, and other countries inimical to France, detached a number of those insurgents from their chief, who, by their thorough fanaticism, were likely to give him the most effectual support, he yet effected his purpose of raising at least one regiment; and, passing into the service of the crown, he received the rank of

Colonel and a pension from Louis XIV.^{*} He, however, soon became alarmed by the evident suspicion and doubt with which he was regarded in the French army, and after a time retired into Savoy. He thence proceeded to Holland and England, where he obtained considerable rank and reputation, was employed in the wars in Spain, and died, we are told, a general officer.

The picture which Voltaire gives of this man is entirely contradicted by the memoirs of Villars himself, and by a letter of his to Chamillart, dated the 5th June 1704, in which he gives an account of the same conversations with Cavalier which Voltaire cites, but in a totally different manner. Instead of a mere intemperate rustic, who ruled his followers by means of a prophetess, called the Great Mary, Villars, himself, in the letter I mention, describes him thus, "He is a peasant of the lowest class, not twenty-two years of age, and who does not seem eighteen; little,* and without anything imposing in his demeanour, qualities necessary for the people, but endowed with firmness and good sense in a surprising degree. I will give you one trait of him. It is certain that in order to control his people he often put some of them to death; and I asked him yesterday, "Is it possible that, at your age, and without

* I translate almost literally, though it will be perceived that the second clause of the Marshal's sentence does not make logical sense with the first. His meaning, however, is perfectly clear.

the long habit of command, you should not have any difficulty in often ordering the death of your own people?' 'No, sir,' said he, 'when it seemed to me just.' 'But whom did you employ to execute it?' 'The first that I ordered to do so, without a single one ever having hesitated to fulfil my orders.'

"I doubt not," continued Villars, "that you will find this very surprising. Besides, he has a great deal of skill in obtaining supplies, and disposes his troops for an action as well as officers well acquainted with the service could do it."

Such is the account of Villars of this extraordinary man; but although it is generally stated by French historians that Villars completely succeeded in calming the troubles of Languedoc, such was not entirely the case. The efforts of the revolted fanatics certainly became desultory and ill-regulated, and, probably, had the means pursued by Villars been followed up by himself, they would ultimately have proved perfectly successful. That great officer, however, was called from the South to command the army on the Moselle, and Marshal Berwick, who succeeded him, had scarcely arrived on the scene, when a conspiracy was formed by the Camisards of the boldest and most extraordinary character.

Berwick was sitting one evening with Basville when a spy of the fanatics presented himself, and either being touched with remorse, or acting from some other motive which we do not know, in-

formed them that a great number of the chief Camisards were in the town of Montpellier. This was all he would say, and not the fear of death itself could draw from him anything more. The gates of the town, however, were immediately shut, a general perquisition made, and three strangers, who offered instant resistance when they were found, were discovered by the police. One of them was killed in consequence of his determined resistance, and the two others were taken wounded. From one of these Berwick learnt, by threats of putting him to death, that an extensive and general conspiracy had been formed for seizing him and Basville, for obtaining possession of the strong town of Nismes, for causing the whole province to revolt, and for introducing foreign troops. Every part of this account was found to be correct; precautions were taken to seize the Camisards in Nismes, and an immense number were arrested in that town, of whom thirty were put to death by Basville, after a trial, perhaps, not of the fairest kind, as it was under a special commission from the court.

At the same time there can be no doubt, from the testimony of Berwick himself, who solemnly pledges his honour to the fact, and that honour shines pure and resplendent without one spot upon it, that there was no sort of crime which these men had not committed, even to roasting the priests that they caught alive, and other horrors with which we cannot stain this page. Several others of the chiefs were ar-

rested from time to time during the summer of 1705 ; but the Camisards thenceforth appeared no more, except in scattered troops scarcely worthy of notice.

During the time that these transactions were taking place in Languedoc, and occupying the arms, the attention, and some of the best officers of Louis, other events occurred affecting his external relations which called for the exertion of every energy both on the part of the Monarch and the country ; and to those events and their causes we must now turn.

CHAPTER VI.

State of Europe after the Peace of Ryswick. — Claims to the Spanish succession. — Plans and purposes of William III. — Partition treaties. — Will and Death of the King of Spain. — Conduct of Louis. — War of the Succession commenced. — Death of William. — Marlborough takes the field. — He is successful in the Low Countries. — French successes on the Rhine. — Campaign in Italy. — Capture of Villeroi. — Battle of Luzzara. — Destruction of the French fleet at Vigo. — French successes in Germany in 1703. — Campaign of Marlborough. — Tongres taken by Villeroi. — Bonn taken by Marlborough. — France loses the support of Savoy and Portugal. — Capture of Gibraltar. — Naval victories of England. — The War of the Succession in Spain. — Campaign in Flanders and Germany. — Battle of Donauwerth and of Blenheim. — Brilliant campaign of Villeroi. — Villeroi's lines forced — He is defeated at Ramillies. — Reverses of France. — Successes of the Allies. — Victory of Malplaquet. — French reverses in Italy. — Invasion of France. — State of France. — Louis sues for peace. — Refused. — Fall of Marlborough. — Peace of Utrecht. — Last Years and Death of Louis. — Some observations on his character.

SCARCELY was the peace of Ryswick signed when the Sovereigns of Europe turned their eyes towards fresh subjects of contention. The health of the Spanish King was daily declining, and for the vast succession he was about to leave there were five claimants, of different degrees of consanguinity. We shall only, however, notice three of these, although the slight claims of the Duke of Orleans, brother to Louis XIV, in some degree affected the conduct of the French monarch towards that prince's son, the Duc de Chartres. These three claimants were, the Dauphin of France, the Emperor Leopold, and the son of the Elector of Bavaria. The

Dauphin claimed in right of his mother, Maria Theresa, daughter of Philip IV. and sister of the reigning King. The Emperor claimed both in right of his mother, Maria Anne, daughter of Philip III, and on his direct descent from Johanna of Castile. The Prince of Bavaria founded his title on the rights of his mother, the daughter of Margaret Theresa, sister of the reigning monarch of Spain, and half-sister of the Queen of Louis XIV.

The Dauphin and the Bavarian prince were certainly the nearest claimants in point of blood; but the Emperor urged against them that Margaret Theresa, and Maria Theresa, had both made a solemn renunciation on their marriage. The Elector of Bavaria, however, supported his son's title, by pointing out that the renunciation of Margaret had neither been confirmed by her father the King of Spain, nor ratified by the Cortes, both of which acts, according to the Spanish law, were necessary to give validity to the renunciation. Louis XIV. went farther still, and maintained that no renunciations were valid at all, whether recognized by the Spanish King and the Cortes, as had been the case with his own wife, or not.

Leopold, resting satisfied that the renunciations would be held good by the other powers of Europe, only endeavoured to avert all that jealousy which would naturally follow the union of the Imperial and Spanish crowns, by entering into a compact with his eldest son Joseph to relinquish their claims in favour of his second son Charles. The

young Prince of Bavaria had no territories of sufficient importance to render his exclusion necessary to the safety of other states, and he might therefore hope, not unjustly, to be supported by England and Holland.

Such was the state of the case at the signature of the treaties of Ryswick, and as soon as that act was accomplished, William of England, who had so successfully thwarted the ambitious designs of Louis XIV. by force of arms, proceeded to guard against any extraordinary extension of his power, by diplomacy not less clear sighted and skilful than his military efforts had been vigorous and persevering. His proceedings on this occasion have been made the subject of vituperation by French writers, even of a very late date ; but nobody, who looks dispassionately at the transactions of this period, will doubt that he had two great, important, and beneficial views before him, in which he was alone thwarted by circumstances, and not by any miscalculation upon his own part. The first of these views was, to insure that the ambition of Louis XIV. should not totally and permanently overthrow the balance of power in Europe ; the second, to prevent the French monarch's efforts for that purpose from plunging the world once more into a general war. To accomplish the first, it was absolutely necessary to insure that the crowns of France and Spain should not be united on the same head ; and to accomplish the second it was requisite, first, to make such a contingent par-

tition of the Spanish monarchy, as to give a sufficient inducement to all parties to content themselves with a share rather than to go to war for the whole; and secondly, to array such forces in support of that partition, as to deter the most ambitious of the claimants, Louis XIV, from grasping with violence more than was allotted to him. Such were distinctly the views and purposes of William; and such views and purposes would seem to be wise and just.

The formation of his scheme occupied the end of the year 1697, and the beginning of the year 1698, and it was drawn up under the eyes even of the French ambassador. By this treaty the crown of Spain was assigned to the Electoral Prince of Bavaria; Sicily, Naples, and the islands possessed by Spain on the coast of Italy, with several other detached portions of the monarchy, were given to the Dauphin; and the Milanese, with a number of other territories, was assigned to the Imperial family. After having been thus arranged in London, the treaty was signed at the Hague in the presence and with consent of ambassadors from all the principal states in Europe, with one exception. Louis himself fully consented to the arrangement, and the only person whose consent was not gained was the Emperor. The approbation of the French King, however, was highly politic, for by becoming a party to a treaty which virtually recognized the nullity of all renunciations, and which assigned an incompetent portion of the Spanish territories

the Imperial family, he at once established the principle of his right, and threw a motive of division between the Empire and the maritime powers. The first partition treaty, however, was scarcely concluded, when the Spanish monarch, having acquired information of the fact, became indignant at this prospective division of his territories, and made a will, leaving his whole dominions to the Bavarian prince, with a positive prohibition of any partition whatsoever.* The will was scarcely signed, when it and the treaty were both rendered vain by the death of the young Prince of Bavaria at Brussels, not without suspicion of poison; and the claims of Louis and Leopold were the only ones left of any weight.

A new treaty of partition was immediately entered into, and by its provisions ample satisfaction, as it would seem, was offered to the house of Austria. Spain, the Netherlands, and the Indies were to be the portion of the Archduke Charles. Naples, Sicily, and some other territories were assigned to the Dauphin, and the only addition to the portion formerly assigned to France which Louis was now to obtain, was the long-contested territory of Lorraine, which was to be compensated by the cession of the Milanese to the Duke of Lorraine. The Archduke was to be prevented by force from making any attempt upon Spain or Italy till the throne became vacant, and three months were allowed the

* Voltaire says, that the will had been made before the treaty. This, however, is proved to be incorrect.

Emperor to form and announce his final decision as to whether he would accept or reject the terms proposed.

“ Louis again consented to these arrangements, and it has even been considered doubtful whether he did not absolutely suggest them. One thing, however, is certain, that he saw that such steps would inevitably tread out the last sparks of the league of Augsburg; that the division of his enemies must necessarily take place if the Emperor persisted in claiming the whole Spanish succession, and that a fair pretext was given to France for continuing her military preparations. At the same time, it is likewise clear, that though he affected to be perfectly satisfied with the moderate portion of the expected inheritance assigned to France, he carried on a thousand intrigues to destroy the Austrian party at the court of Madrid, and succeeded not only in driving all the adherents of the Emperor from the councils of the King and Queen, but in disposing the great bulk of the Spanish nation to support a Bourbon prince upon the throne.

It was now asserted that the renunciation of Maria Theresa had only been demanded to prevent the union of the two crowns upon one head; and that if that objection could be removed, the renunciation was immediately null. This subtle doctrine was propounded by the Cardinal Porto Carrero; but he found some difficulty in rendering it palatable to the King of Spain, who was sincerely

attached to the Austrian family, to which he belonged; but ultimately, the intrigues of France, the arguments of the Cardinal, the advice of the Pope, and the opinions of his council, prevailed over the hesitating mind of Charles II, and he signed a will appointing Philip, Duke of Anjou, the second son of the Dauphin, universal heir of the Spanish monarchy.

The efforts which had been made to produce this result were too difficult and laborious not to attract attention. A general rumour prevailed throughout Europe, that a will had been signed in favour of a French prince, and that the King of France, while affecting to be a willing participator in the partition treaty, had employed every energy in secret to set it aside. The diplomatic correspondence of the day, too, suffers the truth to appear in various instances, but the whole truth is not told by any one, and it is evident that, perfectly understanding the occult meaning of the expressions which they used, the King, his ministers, and his ambassadors, employed in general the most equivocal language in regard to the Spanish succession even in writing to each other, safely guarding themselves by such means against the evil consequences of discovery.

Suspensions, indeed, were entertained, and it would seem that explanations in regard to his conduct were more than once demanded of the French King. The assurances of Louis, however, calmed the

States of Holland, and the government of England, and he continued his preparations as if to give effect to the partition treaty, while there can be little doubt that the object of those preparations was to seat his grandson on the throne of Spain. What was the exact nature of the intrigues used by Louis, to what extent they were carried, and by what means conducted, is a matter which will probably always remain in obscurity, as well as what plan of action he had laid down for himself to meet the various contingencies which might present themselves. My own belief is, that he decidedly laboured to procure the nomination of a French prince, and prepared to support in arms that nomination if it should be made; but that had the will of the Spanish King confirmed the arrangements of the partition treaty, he would not have attempted to put it aside, but would only have employed his forces to overawe the ambition of the house of Austria, and to compel its submission to the partition of the Spanish dominions.

The will of Charles II. had scarcely been signed when death put the question to issue, and his testament was produced to the eyes of the world. If then appeared that he had nominated Philip, Duke of Anjou, as his immediate successor to the throne, and in case of his death without children, or his accession to the crown of France, he named the Duke of Berri as next heir, and in his default the Archduke Charles. But a special provision was in-

serted in the will, absolutely prohibiting the union either of the Spanish and the French, or the Spanish and Imperial crowns on the head of the same prince.

Charles II. of Spain died on the 1st of November 1700; notice of the event was immediately transmitted to Louis, and the news, it would appear, reached him on the 8th. It is said that the French King hesitated even at this moment whether he should accept the will or not; and from the memoirs of Danjeau it is clear, that the matter was still apparently in doubt upon the 13th. Ambition, however, prevailed in the end, if it had not been victorious from the beginning; and on the 16th Louis announced to his grandson the decision to which he had come. The Prince was then immediately proclaimed in Madrid as Philip V, and on the 4th of December he set out for his new dominions, where he was received with every expression of joy and satisfaction.

Though astonished at what had taken place, though mortified and apprehensive, neither England nor Holland were prepared to oppose in arms the progress of French ambition, and both those countries immediately recognized Philip as King of Spain, while the Duke of Savoy and the Elector of Bavaria declared themselves ready to support him on the throne with all their power. Only two protestations were recorded against the will of the deceased monarch. The first was that of the Duke

of Orleans, whose contingent rights were entirely overlooked in the will. The second was that of the Emperor, who suffered his intention of resisting to become apparent, though he was by no means prepared to put it into effect. In the mean time, however, the attitude assumed by Louis was so formidable, that there was much reason to suppose the Emperor would be forced to confine himself to protestations and complaints.

The Elector of Bavaria was also governor of the Spanish Netherlands, and France in consequence seemed secure in that quarter. His dominions too opened the way to the heart of the Empire at any time for the armies of France. The Duke of Savoy, whose daughter was promised to the new King of Spain, commanded the way into Italy. The Milanese recognized the title of the French prince at once, and the whole dominions which Charles had left to the Duke of Anjou in Europe, were either by immediate contiguity to France, or by close alliances between the monarch of that country and the princes whose territories intervened, in a situation to be defended by the armies of Louis, without any obstacle lying in the way.

This prosperous condition, however, of the affairs of Louis and his grandson was more apparent than real. Though England and Holland had virtually recognized the title of the new King of Spain, they had determined from the first not to suffer such a preponderance of power to lie in the hands

of the Bourbons, as that which Louis had now obtained. The Duke of Savoy, treacherous as he had shown himself, was not to be depended upon. The minor princes of the empire were jealous of the influence obtained by France, and apprehensive of the union between that country and Bavaria; and two of the greatest generals that ever lived, Prince Eugene of Savoy, and Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, were preparing to put themselves at the head of those armies which were destined to reduce the power of Louis to the lowest ebb.

The first actual efforts of the war began in Italy; but previous to its commencement Louis had thrown garrisons into the principal towns of Flanders, where they were willingly received by the Elector of Bavaria, and had also obtained possession of Mantua. The troops of Spain, for the war was nominally between that crown and the Empire, were commanded by the Prince de Vaudemont, and the auxiliary troops of France by Marshal Catinat, with whom was joined the Duke of Savoy, nominally as generalissimo. The coming storm was very clearly seen for some time before it broke, but Louis gave orders to his generals neither to commence the war, nor to violate the Venetian territory, but to content themselves with the defence of the Milanese. Prince Eugene, however, entertaining no such scruples, advanced rapidly upon them. He sent, it is true, to beg permission of the States of Venice to march through their territories, but he did so march

without waiting for an answer, attacked the French general, Saint Fremont, at Carpi, on the 9th of July, defeated him completely, and forced Catinat back behind the Adda. Every movement that the French army made, every design that the generals entertained, was immediately known to the active German commander, and Catinat began to entertain strong suspicions that the Duke of Savoy was once more betraying those to whom he had allied himself. His representations to the court of France were so strong upon this subject, and his suspicions so manifest to the Duke of Savoy himself, that Catinat was soon after superseded, and Villeroi appointed to take his place. Before Catinat quitted the army, however, it was determined, much against that General's inclination, to attack a post of the Imperial army, at Chiari, which had been strongly fortified, and was supported in the rear by the whole force of Eugene. The prince was soon informed of what was about to take place, and ready to resist, and a sanguinary engagement took place, in which the Duke of Savoy showed the most undaunted courage and pertinacity at the very time that he was in secret alliance with the power he was attacking.

In the mean time vigorous efforts were making in England and Holland, for the purpose of supporting the Emperor by force of arms. Difficulties of various kinds had at first prevented those two states from taking a part in the contest ; for though

William clearly saw danger to the whole of Europe in the successful ambition of Louis, yet he was himself shackled by a short-sighted parliament in the one country, and by narrow and timid views in the rulers of the other. A change, however, soon took place in the feelings of the two nations; the occupation of the frontier fortresses by French troops alarmed the Dutch; the commercial measures taken by Louis, in order to absorb the whole trade of Spain, increased their apprehension. England had its share in such fears, and the encroachment of the French King in every point of policy, made itself felt at the same moment, that the first successes of Eugene and the vigorous efforts of the Emperor came to inspire confidence and excite emulation.

William III, though greatly enfeebled in body, still exerted powerfully his strong and active mind. The first step was a demand made by England and Holland, that the French troops should be withdrawn from the Netherlands; the Dutch then appealed to England for aid, according to the treaty of 1677, and then, on the 7th of September 1701, a general alliance was concluded at the Hague, between Holland, England, and Austria, under the immediate direction of William. The terms were moderate, but the language was firm and strong, and the avowed objects of the treaty were to separate the Netherlands from France, to prevent that country from obtaining any part of the Spanish Indies, and to require satisfaction for the Austrian

claims upon the Spanish monarchy. Subsidiary treaties also had been entered into with Denmark and Brandenburg, and the former country promised a support of twelve thousand men.

Ten days after the signature of the treaty of alliance James II. died at Versailles, and Louis XIV. solemnly recognized his son as King of Great Britain. This might virtually be considered a declaration of war against William, and it caused an universal feeling of indignation throughout the British dominions. The English ambassador was immediately withdrawn from the court of France; the French ambassador was ordered to quit Great Britain; a new parliament was summoned, which by the most extensive corruption perhaps ever known, was rendered whig in its character, and William's views were eagerly followed in regard to an immediate war with France. Liberal supplies were instantly granted for that purpose, all the King's foreign policy was approved, and the Abjuration act marked the sense of the Commons in regard to the unfortunate house of Stuart.

Marlborough was sent over to Flanders at the head of ten thousand men, and William himself was preparing to take the field when death cut short his career, and transmitted his sceptre to others. That sceptre, however, was wielded by Anne to the same effect, for Marlborough and Godolphin followed the line of policy which William had commenced; and Heinsius, the Grand Pensionary, the friend

and admirer of the late Stadtholder, was ready and capable of pursuing the plan of which William had already made him aware. Thus supported, the Emperor had been enabled to strengthen his authority, and concentrate his influence in Germany. A diet had been held at Ratisbon, and a great majority of the electors declared in favour of their chief. The Elector of Bavaria was compelled to enter into a treaty of neutrality, and at length, on the 15th of May, a simultaneous declaration of war against Louis was made by the courts of Vienna and London, and their high mightinesses the States of Holland.

Louis had long been preparing to meet the coming storm, and while he reinforced the armies in Italy, acting under the command of Villeroi and the Duke of Savoy, a force of sixty thousand men took the field in the Low Countries, led by Boufflers and the Duke of Burgundy. Another large army was collected on the Rhine, and the war so lately extinguished, recommenced with as much fury as ever, but with a more important object as the subject of contention.

At first, success seemed to attend the arms of France, and in the beginning of the campaign in Flanders, Boufflers and the Duke of Burgundy advanced almost to the gates of Nimeguen. Marlborough, however, having under his command a force at least equal to that opposed to him, marched to encounter the enemy, and forced the

Duke of Burgundy to retire before him, beginning that splendid course of success which he pursued with scarcely a check to the end of the war. The pupil of Turenne, the same spirit characterized the military efforts of Marlborough, with perhaps a greater degree of fire and activity; and in his very first campaign his combinations were so rapid, and yet so skilful, his marches so unexpected, and yet so well timed and well judged, that the Duke of Burgundy seems to have been confounded as well as astonished; and after retiring, rapidly before the English general, he left the army under the command of Boufflers, and returned to court from an inglorious campaign. Nor were the manœuvres of Marlborough without fruit. Venloo, Ruremond, and Liege were taken in the space of a month, and a number of other places of less importance signalled the progress of the allies against the French monarch.

The French were but little more successful on the banks of the Rhine, where the King of the Romans, at the head of a powerful army, prepared to wrest from France all that she had obtained in that quarter since the peace of Munster. Kaiserwerth, in the Electorate of Cologne, was taken on the 15th of June, and Landau surrendered after a gallant resistance on the 11th of September. At this period, however, the Duke of Bavaria, having made rapid but secret preparations for resisting the Imperial power, violated the neutrality he had

promised, seized upon Ulm and Memingen, and made various efforts to traverse the country which lay between him and the French armies in Alsace. In this, however, he was frustrated, both by the efforts of the Imperial generals, and by the refusal of the Swiss to suffer his troops to cross their territories.

Catinat, recalled from Italy, and the celebrated Villars, had in vain attempted to succour Landau ; but the latter general now made a vigorous effort in order to pass the Rhine, and co-operate with the Elector of Bavaria. Catinat had refused to make the attempt, but Villars, having swelled his army by large reinforcements, proceeded to Huningen, deceived Prince Louis of Baden, who commanded the Imperial forces, effected his passage in the neighbourhood of Friedlingen, and then engaged the Imperial army, which suffered a somewhat doubtful defeat, that obtained, however, for Villars the rank of a Marshal of France.

The Prince Louis, though he had certainly retreated from his position at Friedlingen, was soon in a state to prevent the French from drawing any farther advantage from their first success. The army of Villars recrossed the Rhine, and the Imperial troops retired into winter quarters.

In Italy, in the mean time, various events had taken place, but upon the whole the result of the campaign in that quarter was in favour of France. Only two events, however, will require any parti-

cular remark; the first of which was the surprise of Cremona by Prince Eugene, and the second the famous battle of Luzzara. In every manœuvre, and in every encounter with Villeroi, Eugene had preserved a great superiority, and he entertained so thorough a contempt for the French general, that his enterprises against him assumed a wild and romantic character, which he well knew how to change for prudence and skill, when opposed to an officer of greater judgment. In the month of February 1702, Eugene undertook an enterprise upon Cremona, a strong town garrisoned by the French, and capable of resisting any siege. He first established a communication with a priest of the town, who introduced four hundred German soldiers into the city, through a convent; the soldiers made themselves masters of the gates, and Eugene, with four thousand men, was within the walls, before either the governor of the city or Villeroi, the commander in chief of the French troops, was aware of the presence of an enemy. Both were sleeping soundly, when some discharges of musketry woke them, and Villeroi was captured and sent out of the town as he was running forth to see what was the matter.

Notwithstanding this first success, however, Eugene could not retain possession of Cremona. A French regiment which was assembling at that early hour to be reviewed, was brought up in haste to oppose the Germans. Two Irish regiments joined

the others, and a vigorous resistance was soon organized in the interior of the town. A second corps of Germans, which Eugene expected to arrive, was prevented by various accidents from coming up to support him, and after having fought in the streets of the city during the whole day, Eugene was obliged to retire from the gates, and leave the place once more in the hands of the French garrison.

The capture of Villeroy, however, was the greatest misfortune that could have happened to the Imperial army. The Duke of Vendôme was sent to command the French troops in Italy, in his stead, and though in activity and in genius he was certainly inferior to Eugene, he was equal to him in presence of mind, military skill, and intrepid courage. A number of small engagements and rapid manœuvres took place, in which the advantage was sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other; but at length the grandson of Louis XIV, whom we shall now call Philip V. of Spain, after having visited his Neapolitan dominions, and met with nothing but matter for disgust and disappointment, joined the army under Vendôme at Cremona, and proceeded to cross the Po, in order to expel the Imperial army from the Duchy of Mantua. After surprising and cutting to pieces a detached corps of Eugene's army, Vendôme and Philip encamped in the neighbourhood of Luzzara, at which spot the Imperial general conceived the bold design of surprising them in their

camp. He advanced therefore with all speed and secrecy, and prepared to attack them at the very moment they were proceeding to repose after their march. His approach was accidentally discovered in time, however, and a sanguinary battle ensued, which lasted till nightfall, when the two armies separated, both claiming the victory, though in reality there was no victory on either part. Few prisoners were taken, the carnage was terrible, and several officers of very high importance were lost both to France and to the Emperor.

Philip distinguished himself greatly in the battle, fighting with desperate courage wherever his presence could animate the soldiers. The two armies passed the night in presence of each other, and neither seemed at all disposed to retire; each entrenching its camp more strongly, as if determined to weary out its adversary. Eugene remained the last upon the ground, but Vendôme only marched to capture Luzzara, Borgo Forte, and Guastalla; which would seem to show that any advantage in the engagement was really on the side of the French.

The campaign ended without any further effort of importance in Italy; but in the mean time the state of Spain itself was anything but that which Louis XIV. could have desired. His grandson Philip displayed from the first steps of his administration a degree of indolence and apathy which was never conquered, except in moments of the

greatest difficulty or danger. Discontent succeeded amongst the Spaniards, and although a great majority of the nation remained attached to the Bourbon race, a number of the principal nobles, either publicly or in secret, favoured the cause of the Archduke. An English fleet and army approached Cadiz, co-operating with the Imperialists under the Prince of Darmstadt, pillaged the neighbouring country in a most barbarous manner, and having been frustrated in their designs upon that city, attacked and defeated the French and Spanish fleet in the Bay of Vigo.

The loss of property to the Spanish crown on this occasion was immense, and the navy of the Bourbon monarch was annihilated by the same blow which deprived him of all the supplies on which he had calculated to meet the wants of the ensuing year. Difficulties, however, seemed but to give the young King of Spain some portion of energy, and Louis XIV. did everything in his power to stimulate his grandson to exertion. Never, indeed, does the character of the French monarch appear to greater advantage than in his correspondence with Philip V. The wisdom, the candour with which he praises his good qualities, and reproves his weaknesses; the keen discrimination which he displays in regard to the dangers and difficulties which surrounded the newly-acquired throne of Spain, and the prudence and moderation, gained from experience, with which he directed every step

of his young relation, afford an extraordinary picture of the monarch's mind, all his precepts contrasting strongly with various parts of his own conduct, and especially with the efforts which he was at that very time making to wring from Philip a variety of unjust concessions and privileges in favour of France.

By the vast exertions made by Louis, both in Spain and in France, the campaigns of 1703 proved much more favourable to his arms than might have been expected. On the side of Germany, Villars completed his career with success, took possession of the towns of Offenburg and Rastadt, and then made himself master of the fort of Kehl, after which he advanced with a design of joining the Elector of Bavaria, who projected an attack upon the Tyrol in conjunction with Vendôme, from the side of Italy. Some delays, not easily explained, occurred ;* but at length Villars pushed on rapidly, and leaving a good many towns unattacked behind him, he on the 12th of May effected his junction with the Duke of Bavaria.

Marshal Tallard had been left on the Rhine with a strong corps of observation, to keep the Duke of Baden in check ; and the united army of France and Bavaria, unopposed upon the Danube, threw the whole Empire into consternation. But little,

* St. Simon says that the cause of the delays of Villars was the refusal of a passport for his wife on the part of Prince Louis of Baden, and the commands of the King to go without her.

however, resulted from this favourable situation, for scarcely had the Elector and Villars effected their junction when they again separated, and the former marched to take possession of the Tyrol, while the latter remained upon the Danube. Vendôme, in the mean time, hastened to co-operate with the Elector from the side of Italy, but some skilful operations of Count Staremberg threw unexpected difficulties in his way, and certain information that the Duke of Savoy,—although his daughter Maria Louisa had added another bond to those which tied him to the house of Bourbon, by her marriage with the young King of Spain,—was about to quit his alliance with France, and once more join the house of Austria, forced Vendôme to abandon his part of the projected operation; and the Elector of Bavaria was obliged to abandon the Tyrol and hasten rapidly back into Suabia.

In the mean time a detachment from Villars's army had gained the advantage in a skirmish at Minderkingen, and after the reunion of the troops of France and Bavaria, they again proved victorious over Count Stirum, not far from the spot where the famous battle of Blenheim was to be fought ere long.

While these advantages had been gained in the heart of the empire, the Duke of Burgundy, aided by Vauban, had laid siege to and captured Brissac; but the war in the Low Countries, and on the Lower Rhine, showed a very different face. The

Emperor, well knowing how advantageous it was for him to have such a general as Villeroi in active service against him, had been easily persuaded to set him at liberty; and he was immediately placed over the head of Boufflers, in command of the army of Flanders.

Marlborough was at that time absent from the Low Countries, conducting the siege of Bonne,* which city he took, notwithstanding a most gallant defence made by the Marquis d'Alègre; and Villeroi hastened with impotent speed to seek some opportunity of gaining a petty advantage while the great English general was absent. The Dutch Marshal Overkirk was not sufficiently strong to prevent Villeroi from taking the town of Tongres, which, Berwick informs us, had for its only defence a wall flanked with some miserable towers. No sooner, however, had Bonne surrendered than Marlborough hastened to join Overkirk, and finding the French army much stronger than he had expected, he manœuvred skilfully for some time in the face of Villeroi, seeking to gain some advantage; but in consequence of the superior force possessed by the French in the Low Countries, he was obliged to give up his design of attacking Antwerp and Ostend, and was only able to capture the town of Huy, while the Dutch general Opdam encountered and fought the French in the village of Ekerens.

The French, as usual, claim a complete victory;

* Memoirs of Marshal Berwick, p. 204—206.

but there can be no doubt that in the first instance the success was entirely upon the side of the Dutch, though in the end Opdam was obliged to retire before a superior force, while Schomberg, the second in command, maintained the ground, and covered the retreat with perfect order and regularity. Although the French force was, as we have said, superior to the army under the command of Marlborough, that great general did not hesitate to detach a part of his troops to the support of the Emperor; and even after having done so, he strove, but in vain, to bring Villeroi to a battle. It would seem, however, that the French generals had positive orders against risking such a step, and Villeroi remained in his lines while Huy, Limburg, and Gueldres, were taken; and the campaign ended in the month of November, certainly not to the glory or advantage of France.

Towards Alsace, however, a considerable advantage was gained, for Tallard not only besieged and took the town of Landau, but during the siege defeated a division of the allied army under the Prince of Hesse, who had marched to effect the relief of the place.

One great disaster which happened to France in the course of this campaign was the defection of the Duke of Savoy. Catinat had been the first who had suspected him of intrigues with the enemy; Villeroi had likewise had good reason to believe that he was unfaithful to France; but Vendôme dis-

covered his treachery more completely, and although he was not able to arrest the Prince himself, who kept up a fair appearance to the very last day of his stay in the French camp, he disarmed the troops of Savoy, and would not suffer them to follow their sovereign to join the Austrian forces. With prompt alacrity the French general then turned and defeated a small corps of German troops which was advancing to the support of the Duke; but he was less successful in his efforts to prevent the junction of Count Staremberg with that prince. The Austrian commander effected his purpose with a degree of skill and activity which frustrated all the efforts of Vendôme, and the Duke of Savoy once more found himself at the head of a considerable force.

Another event, scarcely less disastrous in its consequences to France, was the defection of the King of Portugal from his alliance with the Bourbon dynasty in Spain. Not only did he withdraw the support which he had originally given to Philip V, but on the 16th of May he entered into the confederation against Louis XIV, and offered to give the armies of the allies, who were now preparing to support vigorously the Archduke Charles in his claims upon the throne of Spain, an entrance through Portugal into that country. Rapid preparations were carried on by England, in order to take advantage of such an opportunity; and, in the month of March of the following year, the Archduke, under the title of Charles III, landed

in Lisbon at the head of 9,000 English and Dutch troops, supported by a fleet of forty ships of war. For some time, notwithstanding the strenuous exertions of a Portuguese army, the French and Spanish troops under the Duke of Berwick gained considerable advantages; but those advantages ceased with the capture of Port Alègre, and everything which Berwick had gained was lost again before the end of the campaign. This result was clearly attributable to no fault on his part, but to that lamentable system of deceit, procrastination, large promises and small performances, which has been the ruin of so many enterprises conducted with the Spaniards.

One of the most singular events of the whole war took place in 1704, which was the capture of Gibraltar by the fleet under Rooke. After a vain attempt upon Barcelona, the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt and the English Admiral sailed to attack that fortress. A land force was disembarked, and of course produced no effect; the fleet cannonaded the fortress without any better result; but a small party of English sailors landed on the mole in a frolic, found it undefended, called others to their assistance, obtained possession of that important work, and Gibraltar fell into the hands of the English, who have retained possession of it ever since.

Scarcely had the English fleet accomplished this extraordinary undertaking, when every effort was

made upon the part of France and Spain to recover it. Villadarias, and De Ponti, celebrated for the conquest of Carthagena, were ordered to recover Gibraltar, while the Count of Toulouse, the natural son of Louis XIV, and now Admiral of France, sailed in company with the Marquis de Cœuvres to favour the operations against that place. He had under his command fifty ships of the line, and twenty-four galleys, and he encountered the British fleet off Malaga. The two fleets fought with vigour and determination, and the young Count of Toulouse himself displayed great skill, courage, and determination. Night ended the battle, and both parties claimed the victory; but by the statements of the French authors themselves, it appears, that the Count proposed to the other officers to recommence the attack upon the English fleet upon the following day, but was overruled; those who opposed him alleging that their loss had been already too severe to justify them in renewing the engagement.

We shall now proceed to follow separately the events which took place in Spain, in Germany, in Flanders, and in Italy, as it would require too much space to treat of all exactly in their chronological order.

To the drawn battle between the English and French fleets, succeeded another in the commencement of the following year, which was in no degree doubtful. A part of the French fleet, which was

sent to co-operate with Marshal Tessé in a new siege of Gibraltar, were dispersed and injured by a tempest; but one half of them were attacked, boarded, and captured by the British men-of-war, and those which took refuge on the coasts of Spain were burnt by the English, we believe, without exception. From this blow the French marine never recovered itself during the war.

The siege of Gibraltar was raised with terrible loss on the part of the French; Salvatierra, Valencía de Alcantara, and Albuquerque, surrendered to the allies in the month of May; almost the whole of Catalonia submitted to the Archduke, and Barcelona was captured by the Earl of Peterborough and the army of the Prince of Darmstadt. A slight advantage was gained by Tessé over the Marquis de las Minas, who was compelled to raise the siege of Badajos; but the same French general suffered a signal reverse before Barcelona in the following year, though the whole efforts of the Bourbon dynasty were exerted to recover that important place. The Duke of Berwick was stationed with a corps of observation to keep in check the enemy in Estremadura, and Philip himself, accompanied by Tessé, laid siege to the capital of Catalonia, while the Count of Toulouse, with twenty-five ships of the line blockaded the port. All efforts, however, were vain. Monjuich, indeed was captured, but before anything could be effected against the city, the allied fleets appeared

off the port, and Philip was obliged to raise the siege, leaving behind him his battering train and almost all his baggage. Catalonia was thus confirmed in its adhesion to the Archduke, and the whole of Arragon submitted almost immediately.

The allied army in Estremadura was in the mean time making great progress; and on the one side Peterborough and the Archduke marched on from Saragossa, by Molina and Pastrana, while Lord Galway, with thirty thousand of the allied troops, advanced by Salamanca upon Madrid. The Queen and the court, who had been left in the capital, retired to Burgos, and in the end the allies took possession of the capital of Castile. In Madrid, however, nothing but silence and solitude greeted them, and the English generals saw that the spirit of the people was against them. This was perhaps the most disastrous campaign for the French dynasty which had yet taken place since the accession of Philip V, for on every side new losses occurred and while the allied armies were overrunning the whole kingdom, the English fleet was subduing all the seaports, and taking possession of the islands in the Mediterranean. Philip, however, who never shone but in adversity, was far from giving way to despair; the exertions of his Queen were incredible; the hearts of the Castilians were entirely in his favour; and gathering together all the troops that he could, he prepared once more to take the field against the allies. Early in 1707, took place the

battle of Almanza, in which the allies under Galway and Las Minas were totally defeated, with a loss of five thousand men, killed and wounded, and twelve thousand prisoners. Both Galway and Las Minas were dangerously wounded in the commencement of the action, but they exerted themselves as far as possible to retrieve their defeat. This, however, was impossible, and Berwick pursued his advantage with so much judgment and activity, that Arragon, Valencia, Murcia, and almost every part of Spain, which had submitted to the allies, (with the exception of Catalonia, and the towns of D nia, Alicante, and Gibraltar,) were recovered. By this time the Duke of Orleans had joined the Spanish forces, and Lerida was soon after besieged by him, and taken on the 3rd of October. He captured Tortosa also in the beginning of the following year, while Asfeld proved likewise successful against D nia and Alicante.

Thus, in two campaigns, Spain may be said to have been twice conquered, once by each party. A slight indication of success on the part of the allies took place in the year 1709, during which Staremberg succeeded in capturing Balaguer, and in the following year the same general twice completely defeated the troops of Philip V, at Almenara and at Saragossa.

Madrid was once more now open to the enemy, and Philip himself retreated to Valadolid. Charles entered the capital in triumph; but the allies were

net again by solitude and silence; and Philip, finding himself still supported by the affection of his people, rejected even the pressing instances of his grandfather to resign the crown of Spain. With the aid of Vendôme, who was now sent to his assistance by Louis, he once more recovered all that he had lost, defeated in a general engagement the forces of the allies under Staremberg and Stanhope, and having reduced Arragon, and a great part of Catalonia, he prepared in 1711 to lay siege to Barcelona. It was about this period that the unfortunate change took place in the councils of Queen Anne, which led to an alteration in the whole policy of Europe, and ended in the lamentable peace of Utrecht. From this moment the war languished, and nothing of any great importance occurred in Spain till the death of Louis XIV.

We must now return to notice the campaigns in Germany and Flanders during the year 1704. Successful in every respect against Villeroi, during 1703, Marlborough might well expect to open the next campaign against that incompetent commander by the reduction of the most important towns in Flanders; but a change had taken place in Louis' operations, which called for a corresponding change on the part of the English general. Villars, who, if not the best, was certainly one of the best officers left in the French service, had been recalled from the command in Germany, on account of his disputes with the Elector of Bavaria,

and had been sent to reduce to obedience the body of fanatical insurgents, called the Camisards, in the Cevennes, where, as we have noticed elsewhere, a number of men, fancying that they were prophetically inspired, were daily gaining proselytes, and had hitherto set at defiance all the forces that Louis could spare to act against them.

Marshal Marsin had been appointed to command the troops formerly under Villars, and now with an army of thirty thousand men he co-operated with the Duke of Bavaria upon the Danube, laid Austria itself under contribution, and threatened Vienna on one side, while the Hungarian insurgents menaced the Imperial capital on the other.

Such was the state of things in the beginning of 1704, and to all appearance the throne of the Emperor tottered beneath him. Under these circumstances he called Prince Eugene from Italy, with whatever troops could be spared, and left that country so completely exposed that Vendôme and his brother found little or no opposition in their efforts for the reduction of Piedmont and the Modenese.

At the same time that the Emperor recalled Prince Eugene, he notified his situation to Marlborough, and besought his aid; and that great general, without a moment's hesitation, hastened towards the spot where the greatest danger lay, leaving Overkirk, with a considerable body of the allied troops, to amuse Villeroi by the bombard-

ment of Namur. Marlborough took with him, however, the élite of his forces, consisting of ten thousand infantry, and a small body of horse; and advancing by rapid marches towards the Danube, he found the Elector of Bavaria strongly entrenched near Donauwerth, with about sixteen thousand men.

Marlborough, though inferior in force, hesitated not to attack the Elector. After a sanguinary conflict, the Bavarian lines were carried, and driving the enemy before him, the English general captured Donauwerth, passed the Danube and cast himself into Bavaria. This bold and decided proceeding was not unwatched by either party, and Marshal Tallard, with a reinforcement of thirty thousand men, after holding some slight communication with Villeroi, marched on into Germany to support the Elector of Bavaria. Villeroi followed Tallard across the Rhine, in order to support him, if necessary, and to observe the movements of Eugene and Prince Louis of Baden.

If the movements of Marlborough in the first instance had completely puzzled the French generals, the movements of Eugene at the present moment did not less perplex them, he having marched from Vienna to Phillipsburg, and then returned, first making a movement upon Wirtemberg, and then directing his march to Ulm. His purpose was to keep up his communication with Marlborough; but his proceedings, by serving to

puzzle the French generals, caused them to lose time, and Tallard did not effect his junction with the **Elector** of Bavaria, till fifteen days after the period at which he had been expected. No sooner had he joined the **Elector**, however, than it was determined that the united forces of France and Bavaria should give battle to the **Duke of Marlborough**. Eugene, who had been sporting with **Villeroi**, hastened to support his colleague, and the two adverse armies met in the neighbourhood of **Hochstet** or **Blenheim**, on the 13th of August 1704.

The French and Bavarian army amounted to between sixty and seventy thousand men, while that of the allies did not number more than fifty-two thousand.* Although the generals of France had obtained a most advantageous position in various respects, all the dispositions on the part of the French seem to have been more or less defective, and there can be no doubt that two such officers as Eugene and Marlborough more than counterbalanced the inequality of numbers, when opposed to such generals as Tallard, Marsin, and the **Duke of Bavaria**.

The battle began before mid-day,† by Marlborough passing a rivulet, and attacking the corps com-

* Tallard acknowledged that his forces were superior.

† Some of the French accounts say at eight o'clock in the morning. The English place the first attack between eleven and twelve.

manded by Marshal Tallard, which was upon the right. The nature of the ground prevented Eugene from commencing the attack at the same time, but he hastened on; while Tallard himself, who had left his post, and gone to the left just before the action began,* hurried back as fast as possible towards the village of Blenheim. He found the French cavalry already giving way before the vigorous charge of the Duke of Marlborough.

A detached corps of French troops, in the town of Blenheim, was soon cut off from the right of their army; the cavalry of that wing, notwithstanding all the efforts of Tallard, was completely routed; that general himself was taken, mistaking, from the shortness of his sight, a body of Hessians for a body of French troops; and at the same time Eugene succeeded in driving back the forces opposed to him, while the panic which the complete rout of the left wing occasioned, spread through the rest of the army. Nothing was thought of but flight; and thousands of the soldiers threw themselves into the Danube, and perished in the stream.

The Count Du Bourg retreated with a small body of infantry through the marshes. Marsin endeavoured to give some orders to the retreat of the rest; but eleven thousand men of the best troops of France were left in the small town of

* Tallard, we are told, had dined in the centre, and had then, M. de Quency says, been prevailed upon against his will to go to the left to examine what was going on.

Blenheim, without the possibility of escaping, and with no choice left but to surrender.

This ended the battle of Blenheim; the allies lost therein upwards of five thousand killed, besides great number of wounded; but upon the part of France and Bavaria not twenty thousand men, of the sixty thousand who had entered the battle, could be brought together again after it was over.

Tallard was taken, as we have shown, and his son, who had been severely wounded at his side, died a few days after the battle.* The prisoners amounted to fourteen thousand men; but, by the avowal of the French themselves, who bear the loss of liberty with more impatient irritability than any other nation on earth, "they were treated by Marlborough with attention, complaisance and politeness in everything, and with a modesty perhaps even superior to his victory."

The remains of the French army hastened to evacuate Germany; and while Eugene swept the whole of Bavaria, leaving the unfortunate Elector stripped of every part of his dominions, Prince Louis of Baden, followed by the King of the Romans, besieged and took Landau; and Marlborough, having repassed the Rhine, made himself master of Treves and Trarbach. The Duke of Bavaria, a fugitive from his own dominions, retired to Brussels, and his brother, the Elector of Cologne,

* St. Simon, chap. xviii. precisely marks that he did not die on the field, as Voltaire and others declare.

driven from his states, likewise took^{*} refuge in Flanders.

The recall of Villars, however, in the following year, 1705, to the command of the army in Alsace, changed entirely the aspect of affairs in that quarter; and though the troops were dispirited, and the armies of Louis terribly diminished in number, yet Villars had the honour of disconcerting the plans of Marlborough. He entrenched himself at Sirk, in advance of Thionville and Sar Louis, both of which places he covered, and by both of which he was supported; and he thus ensured that Marlborough should not fall upon Alsace, without fighting another general battle in the endeavour to force his camp. Marlborough was anxious to make the attempt, and concerted measures with Prince Louis of Baden for that purpose. Prince Louis, however, who was naturally slow and was jealous also of Marlborough, failed in executing his part of the proposed operations, kept his fellow commander waiting till the attempt was too late, and Marlborough was obliged to decamp without effecting the purpose of the campaign. Before he went, however, he is reported to have written to Villars, justifying himself for abandoning his purpose without a battle.*

“Do me the justice to believe,” he said, “that my retreat is the fault of the Prince of Baden, and

* Villars notices this fact as well as the English historians.

that I esteẽm you as much as I am angry with him."

In the mean while, Villeroi had been committing his usual faults in the Low Countries. Lines had been constructed between Leau and Heilisen; but they were considerably too much extended. Roquelaure, who commanded, was absent from his post; and Marlborough, deceiving Villeroi, attacked and carried the lines, driving the forces which occupied them before him, as far as Louvain. Not long after, Villars himself, having weakened his army by detachments sent to strengthen the armies of Villeroi and Marsin, found himself unable to defend his own lines at Haguenaau, and they were carried by the Prince of Baden on the 28th of September. The town of Haguenaau was also immediately attacked by the Imperial forces, and to save his troops from being made prisoners of war, Peri, who commanded therein, made his escape in the night, and the city surrendered.*

The campaign of 1706 was still more unfavourable to the French arms. Villeroi still commanded in Flanders, and he was there opposed by Marlborough. Resolved not to suffer this campaign to pass without signalizing himself by a battle, the French marshal took up a position by which the little town of Ramillies was immortalised. All that requires to be said upon this battle is, that he

* The conduct of this officer was remarkably gallant and serviceable to France.

had posted himself in such a situation that his left was completely paralysed, by being placed behind the little Geete, and the marshy ground upon its banks; that Marlborough, seeing this error, as well as a number of others which Villeroi had committed, took advantage of it to bring his whole force to act against the centre and the right of the French army. All the French officers who surrounded Villeroi saw his errors also, and pointed them out to him, but he would listen to no counsel; and the French army, totally without confidence in its general, was vanquished almost before it was attacked. Marlborough met with little if any resistance, and in less than an hour the whole French force was in flight. Never was there so complete a rout, never so disastrous a defeat. Not above two thousand men were killed on the part of the allies. The number on the side of France was much more considerable; but their principal loss was in prisoners and in missing, which swelled it to the number of more than twenty thousand men. The results, however, were much more important to France than even those of the battle of Blenheim. The whole Spanish Netherlands were lost at once: thirteen principal towns were captured one after the other, and Marlborough marched through the country in triumph.

Villeroi dared not write the tidings of his defeat to Louis for several days; but though the King recalled him from a command of which he was

incapable, he treated him kindly, merely saying to him when he saw him, "Alas! Marshal, we are not fortunate at our age." The Duke of Vendôme was immediately recalled from Italy to replace Villeroi in the command of the army; but his absence from that country did more harm than his presence in Flanders could do good.

It luck'ly happened, however, for the reputation of Vendôme, that the principal efforts of the war were destined to be carried on by Villars on the side of Germany. In Flanders, Vendôme soon found that little was to be done, and in his first conferences with the Duke of Bavaria various differences arose between them which were not calculated to enable them to act together with vigour. In order to repair the loss sustained at Ramillies, a large detachment from the army of Germany had marched into Flanders; but Vendôme, swallowed up by indolence, was not destined to effect anything against Marlborough, and, after having narrowly escaped being surprised, he returned to the court at the end of 1707, where he soon became as discontented with Louis as Louis had already become discontented with him.

On the Rhine the campaign of 1707 was, for a time, far more favourable to France. Villars, at the head of a considerable body of troops, forced the Imperial lines at Stalhofen, drove the enemy's troops before him in every direction, and once more carried the arms of France to the banks of the Da-

nube. The whole of Wirtemberg was laid under contribution, and the Margrave of Bareith, who commanded the Imperial troops after the death of Prince Louis of Baden, could by no efforts keep the field against the French army. At length, however, George, Elector of Hanover, afterwards George I. of England, assumed the command of the Imperial troops, and a better system of action immediately made itself visible.

About the same time the army of the French marshal was enfeebled by the necessity of detaching a considerable force to Dauphiné and Provence. Villars, in turn, was now obliged to retire, and the Imperial troops harassed him in his retreat, and attacked him with considerable success near Offenburg. He can scarcely, indeed, be said to have been defeated at that place, for but a small part of either army was engaged; but the Imperialists obtained possession of his camp, which they plundered, and also captured the greater part of his baggage. His expedition in Germany was rendered remarkable by his delivering a number of the French prisoners, and recovering several of the cannon which had been taken at the battle of Blenheim; but no other fruit was derived from his temporary success, except, indeed, inasmuch as the spirits of the French troops were raised, and some degree of hope and confidence was restored to the councils of Louis.

In the mean while, the demands of Vendôme,

notwithstanding the slight success which he had obtained in the campaign of Flanders, became excessive, and the whole court of Louis was in eager opposition to him ; but the monarch himself, who knew well his great military talents, overlooked his faults, and once more placed him at the head of an army destined to oppose Marlborough and Eugene. The young Duke of Burgundy, indeed, was nominally in command, but the supreme power over all the movements was intrusted to Vendôme.

The campaign opened favourably for France : before Eugene, who was hastening to join Marlborough, could effect that object, Ghent and Bruges were taken by surprise, and it was proposed to march for Oudenarde, burn that city, and encamp in such a manner as to cut off the supplies of the allies. Vendôme's usual inactivity, however, delayed him long ere he began his advance. Marlborough gained three forced marches upon him, and encountered him in the neighbourhood of the city he was about to attack. For some time Vendôme would not believe that the English army was so near, but at length he was convinced by his advance guard being attacked, and, hurrying forward, he brought up his troops in great confusion, and in such a manner as only to oppose the heads of his columns to the whole line of the enemy.

Night set in upon a scene of confusion seldom witnessed, and the question became whether the

French army should keep its ground and endeavour to recover its advantage, or retreat during the night. The latter course was determined on, notwithstanding the opposition of Vendôme; and, indeed, it would appear that several corps were already quitting the field when night fell. The loss of the French was considerable in the battle, and still more considerable in the retreat; and the furious dissension which ensued between Vendôme and the Princes who were in his camp was calculated to prove still more disastrous to France than even the defeat of the 11th July.

Vendôme openly accused the Duke of Burgundy of cowardice, and there can be no doubt that that Prince never stopped in his flight till he had placed the canal of Bruges between him and the enemy.

While these quarrels agitated not only the French camp but the court of Louis, the allies pushed on, levied contributions in Artois, and made preparations for the siege of Lille, in which they were left undisturbed by their divided adversaries. Boufflers, though lately mortified by several undeserved slights, insisted upon throwing himself into a place which no one would believe was about to be besieged; and the immediate attack of Lille justified his foresight, while his gallant defence was a tacit reproach to those who had ill-treated him. During four months he continued to hold out the city against all the efforts of Prince Eugène; but, notwithstanding the reiterated orders of Louis XIV

few efforts were made to relieve it; and the dissensions of Vendôme and the Duke of Burgundy contributed as much to the reduction of the place, as the precautions of Marlborough, who commanded the army which covered the siege. The citadel, however, did not surrender till the 8th of December. Towards the end of the siege Vendôme had made some movements to cut off the convoys of the besieging army, but his detachments were defeated, and his measures proved ineffectual. Equally useless was an attempt made by the Elector of Bavaria upon Brussels; and as soon as the surrender of Lille enabled the allied armies to march, all the towns that the French had taken in the commencement of the campaign, comprising Ghent and Bruges, were recovered by the allies.

During this campaign, Louis, misled by the representations of the Scotch adherents of the house of Stuart, despatched the Prince, called the Pretender, with a fleet and army to the mouth of the Frith of Forth. Many historians have looked upon this as a mere bravado, and Louis himself acknowledged that the glory of undertaking such an enterprise, while pressed on all sides by enemies, had no slight share in inducing him to make the attempt upon Great Britain. More reasonable motives, however, are to be found in the prospect of withdrawing, by such a diversion, the triumphant forces of Marlborough from the campaign in Flanders; and in this respect the expedition was not

without success, though in every other respect it was perfectly fruitless.

The fleet under the command of Forbin arrived upon the coast of Scotland, but the signals which had been agreed upon with the Scottish malcontents were not displayed from the shore; the English fleet was found to be on the look out, and Forbin returned to Dunkirk, carrying back with him the army which he had intended to disembark upon the coast.

Even accidental circumstances seemed to combine for the reduction of the power of Louis XIV. to the lowest ebb. The seasons were as unfavourable to him as the result of arms, and a scanty harvest in 1708 was only a prelude to the tremendous winter which followed. The principal efforts of the war, however, continued to be made in Flanders; but the events of the last campaign had caused the recall of Villars, the most successful general which France then possessed, from his command in the south, in order, if possible, to make head against Marlborough.

The allies had shown a disposition to attack Douai and Arras; but Villars, though with an inferior force, took up a position in the neighbourhood of La Bassée and Bethune, so as to cover those two towns, and Eugene and Marlborough then turned their arms against Tournay, which surrendered after a siege of twenty-one days. As soon as that town had fallen, the allies marched towards Mon

and Villars immediately hastened forward to save so important a city if possible. He is said to have missed an opportunity of fighting the allies, while a part of their forces still remained behind in the neighbourhood of Tournay. Both armies, however, had determined to fight; and after a sharp skirmish on the 9th of September, Villars employed the whole of the 10th in entrenching himself at Malplaquet, while the allies made use of the time thus gained in bringing up their various detachments, and swelling their army as far as possible. Thus, on the morning of the 11th, Marlborough and Eugene were at the head of a force at least equal to that of the French.* In one point, however, they had greatly the advantage. Almost all their forces were composed of veteran soldiers, accustomed to victory, and inspired with the expectation of success.

The French troops, on the contrary, were many of them fresh recruits, and had hanging over them

* It is impossible ever to ascertain the exact numbers which fought in the various battles that have taken place in modern Europe, as mis-representation on all sides has become so systematic that the real returns have, in almost all instances, been suppressed. In the present instance, the French declare that they were inferior by **about** one-sixth to the allies in men, and **greatly** inferior in artillery. The English accounts, in general, **represent** the two armies as nearly equal, and it is perhaps but fair to conclude that the allies were somewhat superior. Villars, in a letter to the King of France, declares that the French were greatly inferior in infantry, but would seem to imply that **they** had the advantage in point of cavalry.

the memory of many disasters and defeats. They had, however, the advantage of strong entrenchments, and in command, two generals whom they loved and esteemed : Villars, whose frequent success and brilliant enterprises gave them better hopes for the result of their efforts ; and Boufflers, the soul of honour and of patriotism, who, after the gallant defence of Lille, had voluntarily offered to serve under the command of Villars, although he was considerably senior to that officer. The battle was the best contested in which the French troops had fought since the commencement of the war ; and it would seem to have been won almost entirely by the skill and decision of Marlborough although the French attribute their defeat entirely to Prince Eugene, who commanded on the right of the allied army.

The Dutch, who were on the left of the allies, were completely defeated, and driven some way before Boufflers. The English and Germans on the right attacked Villars with the greatest fury, and finding that it would be difficult to support the battle in that quarter, Villars hastened to weaken his centre for the purpose of strengthening his left, and drove back Eugene at the point of the sword. Marlborough immediately saw the movement, and ordering a vigorous attack to be made upon the centre, carried the entrenchments at the point of the bayonet ; at the same time, on the left, Villars himself was wounded by a musket shot in the

leg, which prevented him from re-establishing the battle.*

Boufflers, however, conducted the retreat, which was orderly and firm, and according to the account of the French, the loss of the allies was much greater than that of France. There can be no doubt that the battle was very sanguinary, twenty thousand men having fallen in the attack of the entrenchments; but it was not alone the retreat of the French which proved the victory of Malplaquet, but the capture of Mons followed immediately, and the allies remained masters of the field during the rest of the campaign.

The gallant conduct of the French soldiery, however, revived the hopes of Louis, and the defeat of Mercy, by the Count Du Bourg, added sensibly to his hopes and satisfaction. Mercy had passed by Basle for the purpose of attacking the higher parts of Alsace; but he was met by Du Bourg, with an inferior force, at Rumersheim, on the 26th of August, and was completely defeated, with the loss of between six and seven thousand men.

The following campaign in Flanders was more disastrous for France, though no battle was fought in that quarter. Douai, Bethune, St. Venant, and

* Villars himself declares that he was at the left when he was wounded; but he does not say that he had weakened his centre. The account of Feuquieres, however, positively states that he did; and he himself admits that Albergotti brought eighteen battalions to the left, though he does not mention where they came from.

Aire were taken one after another; but in the succeeding year, 1711, the war languished on both sides, Bouchain being the only town captured by Marlborough. There were causes, however, by *this time operating*, which paralysed his efforts, and which held out to Louis a prospect of that peace which had now become absolutely necessary to France.

A brief view of the events in Italy, and a momentary consideration of the state of France during 1709 and 1710 will show how absolutely necessary it was for Louis to make peace upon almost any terms that were offered him. We have seen that while Eugene was absent, aiding Marlborough in winning the famous battle of Blenheim, Vendôme and the other French generals who succeeded each other in that quarter, had completely overrun the north of Italy, and had nearly stripped the Duke of Savoy of his dominions.

In the beginning of 1705, however, Eugene hastened to resume the command in the south, and to lead a body of fresh troops to the support of the Duke. Vendôme resolved to prevent his crossing the Adda, and on the 16th of August a sanguinary battle took place for the possession of the bridge of Cassano. Eugene, however, was ultimately repulsed, and several cities were subsequently captured by the French general.

The following year was marked by the battle of Calcinato, in which Vendôme completely defeated

the Imperial army in the absence of Eugene; who, on arriving the next day, found his forces so much reduced and dispirited that it was impossible for him to attempt anything against the French commander, who swept the whole country at his pleasure. The siege of Turin had been determined on during the preceding year by the French, and that city had been invested on the 13th of May, by the Duke de la Feuillade. So long as Vendôme was in the field to cover the operations of this siege, the success of the attempt appeared sure; but on the 23rd of May took place the fatal battle of Ramillies; and Vendôme, as we have shown elsewhere, was recalled from Italy to take the command in Flanders.

After much discussion and hesitation, the Duke of Orleans was appointed to succeed Vendôme in the direction of the armies of Italy. The duke, himself an excellent officer, hastened with all speed towards the scene of action; but, before he arrived there, Vendôme had committed the fault of suffering Eugene to pass the Adige and the Po. When the duke put himself at the head of the army, it would seem that he found it in a sad state of demoralization, owing to the slothful negligence of the officer who preceded him; and in consequence of this state of things he judged it expedient to retreat from Eugene, who was now advancing at the head of some fresh troops from Germany. The Imperial general followed rapidly

towards Turin, taking Carpi, Correggio, Reggio, passing the Tanaro, and effecting his junction with the Duke of Savoy on the way.

The Duke of Orleans, in the mean time, had joined La Feuillade, under the walls of Turin, and proposed in a council of war to march out of the ill-constructed lines from which La Feuillade was carrying on the slow and unskilful siege of the Piedmontese capital, and to give battle to the Imperial army in a better position. He assigned his reasons, which were excellent; but, to his surprise and disappointment, he found that Marshal Marsin, notwithstanding the incapacity he had shown at Blenheim, had in his pocket an authority from Louis to overrule any opinions opposed to his own in command of the army of Italy. The memory of Blenheim did not render him particularly fond of battle in the open field, and he determined to remain in the lines.

Eugene marched to the attack. All the inconveniences which the Duke of Orleans had foreseen, followed in the defence of the lines. After a battle of two hours the French intrenchments were forced, the Duke of Orleans was wounded, Marsin killed, and an army of sixty thousand veteran French soldiers routed in the most disastrous manner that it is possible to imagine.

The loss of the whole of the north of Italy was the consequence, and the terror and confusion were so great, that the French generals seem entirely

to have forgotten that, with the large force at their command, they might still have maintained a part of the Milanese. Not above two or three thousand men had fallen in the action; the troops of Albeggotti had scarcely lost a man; the Count de Grancei was at the head of a strong body of troops, in the duchy of Mantua, and two days after gained a complete victory over the Prince of Hesse; while Casal was at no great distance, offering them the protection of its cannon. Nevertheless they made the best of their way towards Pignerol, apparently for no other reason than because it was on the road to France.

Not only the whole of the north of Italy thus fell into the hands of the Imperialists, but the kingdom of Naples followed; and Eugene and the Duke of Savoy, determining to signalize their success by other great efforts, pushed forward in the following spring into France itself, forcing the French entrenchments on the way, and, in conjunction with the British fleet, laid siege to Toulon.

The consternation in France was general; messengers were despatched in every direction to recall forces from foreign countries to the defence of France itself. Berwick* was ordered to leave the Duke of Orleans to command in Spain, into which country he had now been sent, and to hasten towards Toulon; large detachments were called

* Berwick, Memoires, vol. i. p. 409.

from the army of Villars in Germany, and Marshal Tessé, with what troops could be collected, in haste, marched to relieve the port which was thus menaced. Disease and scarcity, however, had already done more than Tessé's arms could have effected to dispirit the allied army. The Duke of Savoy showed not his usual activity; the heights of St. Catherine were attacked successfully by the French; and the allies, finding that the siege must be long, and knowing armies to be gathering round them, decamped ere their situation became dangerous.

While the allies effected their retreat by the Col de Tende unopposed, Sir Cloudesley Shovel, after having bombarded Toulon, also retired, but with more success than had been the portion of Eugene and the Duke of Savoy, for he at least had accomplished an object but too desirable to England, having burned eight and sunk twenty ships of war, putting an end to that navy which Colbert had so strenuously laboured to create.

From that time the efforts of France on the side of Italy languished altogether, and the Emperor dictated his own terms both to the pope and to all the petty princes who surrounded him. The Duke of Berwick was appointed to command in Dauphiné, with but a very small force, and his orders were to keep strictly upon the defensive. The Imperial troops made some slight efforts on the Savoyard side of the mountains, but were defeated by Dillon

in 1709; and in 1710, in a combined operation with the allied fleet, which made a descent at Cette, they were frustrated by the judicious dispositions of the Duke of Berwick with the Dukes of Roqueleure and Noailles.

The discontented peasantry were prevented from rising; the troops, which had disembarked at Cette, were defeated and driven back to their ships, and the Imperial army was forced to recross the mountains, and leave the French provinces in repose.

The Emperor now applied himself principally to establish his power in Italy, so that no after-effort on the part of France could shake it; and he took a pleasure in mortifying the Pope, by reuniting to the Imperial crown a number of fiefs, upon which the Roman Pontiff had laid greedy hands. Nor was this all: he forced the Pope likewise to lay down his arms, and give up a part of his territories as a security for his peaceful demeanour, and compelled him to acknowledge the Archduke Charles as King of Spain. The Pontiff, in order to keep well with France, tried to persuade Philip V. that this acknowledgment was in no degree advantageous to his opponent; but the French prince was too zealous a Catholic to believe even the Pope; and the people of France, as usual, consoled themselves with a jest.

In the mean time, the resources of the French monarchy were utterly exhausted. Every means had been taken to obtain supplies which the wisdom

of Colbert had denounced as destructive to empires. The revenue had been mortgaged to money-lenders; a system of paper credit had been established, which, if dangerous in a moment of the most unshaken public credit, is almost always fatal when public credit is only supported by the hand of power. Money was not to be procured for the state, even at the most exorbitant rate of interest, and the financiers, called *Traitans*, dared openly to take advantage of the exhaustion of the finances, and the misery of the people, in order to swell by every iniquitous artifice the immense wealth they were amassing.

Louis XIV, pressed on every side by enemies, beholding dominion lost in every part of the world, his fleets annihilated, his armies defeated, and the boldness of his adversaries so great, that they pushed their excursions nearly to the gates of Versailles, and carried off the King's principal equerry almost within sight of his palace, was destined in 1709 to see such evils increased, to find dearth and famine added to all the miseries which his ambition had brought upon his country, and to hear that the ministers whom he sent to supplicate peace, were treated with insult and indignity.

The winter of 1709 was the most rigorous that had been known in the memory of man. A frost so severe that all the rivers of France were frozen to their mouths, and that for some distance from the

shore the sea itself was rendered solid enough to bear loaded carts, set in in December 1708, and lasted two months. A short thaw succeeded, and then again the frost became more rigorous than ever, lasting for three weeks with such intensity, that bottles of spirituous liquors were known to be frozen in rooms where there was continually a fire. So tremendous was the cold that almost all the fruit-trees throughout the land perished. Walnuts, chestnuts, and olives, from which the people in the south derive a great portion of their nourishment, were completely destroyed, and scarcely a vineyard was left throughout the whole of France. Nor was this all: the practice of sowing many kinds of grain in the spring was then almost unknown, and the vegetative principle in the seed which had been sown in autumn was generally destroyed throughout the land.

Some farmers were wise enough, indeed, when a real thaw came, to sow the fields where the corn was destroyed with barley. But this was by no means sufficient to supply the nation, and the apprehension of a scarcity hastened that which was feared.

People began to hoard their grain; the financiers sought to buy it in large quantities, in order to draw a profit even from the starvation of the people; and notwithstanding every effort on the part of the government, this baseness could not be put a stop to. Famine of the most terrible kind spread through

the land, and, to reproduce a picture of the finances, as it is given by an eye-witness, "Nobody could pay any more, because nobody was paid. The people of the country, in consequence of exactions, had become insolvent; commerce, dried up, brought no returns; good faith and confidence were abolished, and thus the King had no further resource than terror, and the employment of his boundless power, which, all unlimited as it was, failed him also, from the want of having something to lay hold of, and to exercise itself upon; there was no circulation, there were no means of re-establishing it." The paper money had fallen into the most terrible state of discredit, and the coin, which was all debased, was now again put in circulation at a third more than its former value.

Such was the situation of France in 1709, and such were the circumstances which determined Louis to apply to his enemies for peace as a suppliant. Early in that year he despatched the President de Bouillé to the United Provinces to endeavour to open a negotiation with the Dutch, and some conferences ensued, but without effect. Torcy, the French secretary of state, then set out secretly for the Hague, and entered upon the question of peace with Heinsius, the Grand Pensionary. But the ministers of Louis, in his old age, were destined to submit to the same insolent haughtiness which the ministers of his youth had displayed towards the Dutch; and the States of Holland, who were

deriving the greatest benefits from the war, and saw England willing to secure to them the whole of Belgium as a barrier, would scarcely even listen to the proposals of a King who had once overrun their country, and brought them as suppliants to his feet.

Heinsius, Marlborough, and Eugene were all united in one design, that of carrying on the war till the power of France was so far reduced as to leave no apprehensions to the rest of Europe. Perhaps they might have some private motives to influence their deliberations, but all those motives tended to a prolongation of hostilities.

In 1707, and 1708 likewise, Louis had made overtures both to the Emperor and the maritime powers ; but those proposals were offered in the tone of a prince still great and powerful, and had produced no effect but that of raising some slight jealousies and misunderstandings amongst the allies. Now, however, he was willing to make every concession that the distress of his situation required ; and what he was ready to grant might well tempt the confederate powers to listen at least, if not to agree.

Regular conferences then took place at the Hague, in the months of April and May 1709, and plenipotentiaries on the part of the allies notified to the ministers of Louis the preliminaries on which they were willing to found a treaty of peace. Those preliminaries were as severe as they well could be ;

and, to me, they appear to have been decidedly imprudent, and not clearly just. Their principal demands were that the whole Spanish monarchy, with some exceptions in favour of the Duke of Savoy and the King of Portugal, should be given up to the house of Austria, and that Louis should himself induce or compel his grandson to descend from the throne of Spain.

It must be remembered that the Emperor Leopold was dead; Joseph, who had succeeded, was without male issue;* and Charles, on whom the allies sought to bestow the whole of Spain, was at that moment much more likely to succeed to the Imperial crown, than Philip to the crown of France.

Louis offered everything but the use of force to dethrone his grandson, but the allies imperiously demanded that he who had raised him up should pull him down; and the French monarch, who, in the council which preceded the opening of these negotiations, had been moved to tears by the picture of his people's distress, refused the humiliating conditions sought to be imposed upon him, and took the extraordinary but noble step of justifying himself to his own subjects, by sending a circular letter to the principal communities of the kingdom, detailing the means he had employed to obtain peace, and the return he had met with from the allies.

The feelings of the French people were roused

* His son, Leopold Joseph, died in 1701.

in favour of their King, and a great effort was made once more to support him; the nobles sent almost all their remaining plate to the mint, and a sum of three millions was collected to open the campaign. A considerable amount of treasure from the new world arrived opportunely at St. Malo shortly after, and a momentary gleam of hope cheered the miserable people of France.

Still, however, Louis sought eagerly for peace, and he saw in the vehement party struggles both of England and Holland, a probability of obtaining it. In both of those countries a large body of the people clamoured loudly for a cessation of the war; in England the Tory party exhausted itself in invectives against the Duke of Marlborough and his government; and in Holland, the traders suffering under Du Gué Trouin, Forbin, and others, declared that the commerce of the country would be lost if the war were protracted.

Louis, more and more severely pressed, sought an opportunity of renewing the negotiation; and taking advantage of an ambiguity in one of the articles of the ultimatum proposed by the allies, declared that he was ready to accede to the terms. Conferences were then appointed to be held at Gertruydenberg, and Marshal D'Uxelles and the Abbé Polignac were appointed to conduct the negotiations on the part of France. The French King now endeavoured to obtain such a modification of that preliminary article which stipulated the de-

thronement of his grandson, as would give him even an excuse for agreeing to it. He offered to withdraw all aid and assistance from Philip whatsoever, and to furnish the allies with a subsidy of a million of livres per month, in order to establish the Archduke on the throne of Spain, giving up at the same time a number of important towns in French Flanders as the security for his word.

The same parties, however, conducted the negotiation on the part of England and Holland as before, and the result was the same. They refused to accept anything but the absolute dethronement of Philip V. by his own grandfather, and Louis again refused.

Up to the present day the policy of the allies upon the present occasion has been viewed as a party question: the Whigs pretending that Louis was insincere in his professed desire of peace, and pointing both to his frequent and notorious breach of promise, and to the equivocating policy which he had frequently pursued: the Tories declaring that Marlborough, Eugene, and the rest were carrying on the war for their own interests, and rejecting the most reasonable and beneficial terms. That those terms were reasonable and beneficial to the allies, there can scarcely be any doubt. By the very showing of the Whig party, the attachment of the Spaniards to Philip V. was very much shaken. It is not denied that the whole forces of

the allies employed in Spain would have seated the Archduke upon the throne in one campaign, and by occupying the fortresses of that country, would have placed it in such a situation that it never could have been reconquered by France. The subsidies given by Louis, in the depressed state of his finances, would have at once raised the condition of the allies so as to enable them to accomplish their purpose with ease, and would have kept him depressed so as to prevent his opposing them. The fortresses he proposed to give up in the Netherlands would, if he failed in his engagements in regard to Spain, have enabled the allies to recommence the war in a more commanding situation than ever; and the interval of repose, supposed to have been his object, would naturally have been more beneficial to them than to him.

The sole reason assigned for the rejection of the French King's offers is the assertion, that, instead of really being desirous of peace, he only sought an interval of tranquillity in order to recruit his forces and restore his finances. There are two answers to this, sufficiently obvious. It would have taken twenty of the best years of Colbert to do anything for the finances of France, and twenty of the best years of Louvois to place her armies in the state in which they had once appeared. Those twenty years must also have been years of profound peace and great exertion, and

when the allies rejected the proposals of France at Gertruydenberg, Louis XIV. was approaching the close of his seventy-second year.

Louis naturally declared that Marlborough, whose avarice was but too notorious, and Eugene, whose personal enmity towards himself was equally well known, were continuing the war to the detriment of their respective countries, for the service of their own private interests and passions. That he sincerely believed such to be the case, no one can doubt; but the opinion of the present day may be, and justly is, different. Eugene, it would appear, was really desirous of peace upon moderate terms, and Marlborough may have been, and probably was, actuated by the lamentable spirit of party—the bane and disgrace of our country—rather than by any design of enriching or aggrandizing himself farther.

Such was the situation of affairs in the commencement of 1711. The allies were victorious everywhere, except in Spain; there was every probability of the Emperor being delivered from the diversion effected both by the Turks and Hungarians; the battle of Malplaquet, although gallantly contested, was still a battle lost to France; and as we have shown, an immense number of towns had in consequence fallen into the hands of the allies.

About that time, however, secret negotiations were opened at the court of France by the Duke of Savoy; and though they ended in nothing, sus-

picion spread amongst the allies in consequence. The still more important fact soon became known in France, that the inclinations of Anne, Queen of England, herself, were opposed to a continuance of the war. The insolence of the Duchess of Marlborough offended and oppressed the Queen; the insinuations of Mrs. Masham suggested the means of delivering herself from domestic tyranny, and afforded her that support and council of which her weakness stood in great need.

A moment of outrageous passion on the part of the Duchess of Marlborough was seized by Queen Anne, and the former favourite was disgraced and dismissed from her offices in the household. Lord Sunderland, the son-in-law of Marlborough, was discharged from the office of Secretary of State, a month after the Duchess had fallen. Godolphin, himself, shortly after followed his colleague; and Harley, placed at the head of a Tory administration, summoned a new parliament, and found himself in a situation to carry through whatsoever measures he chose.

A knowledge of these changes, and of the results which were likely to take place, had reached Paris early in the year 1711; but still Louis could scarcely believe that peace on any favourable terms would be the consequence, while Marlborough retained the command of the army, and seemed to counterbalance by his own weight every favourable disposition of the Tory party towards France.

At length, however, it was announced to Torcy, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that a stranger wished to speak to him; and a priest of the name of Gauthier was introduced to his cabinet. This man, it would appear, had been a spy in England, and having by some means acquired the confidence of Lord Jersey, he was now sent over to Paris to open a negotiation with the French minister. His first address to Torcy, was to demand if he wished for peace; which was, says Torcy himself, "to ask a dying man if he wished to be cured."

From that moment negotiations went on rapidly, and Louis soon found that the terms granted to him would be as favourable, and as much opposed to those formerly demanded, as the intemperance of party spirit could make them. He took advantage of this discovery with the utmost skill. He published a memorial, offering the conditions on which he would be willing to treat, and vaguely expressed an inclination to give every satisfaction to each of the allied powers, but at the same time pointed distinctly to the advantages lately obtained by his grandson in Spain, as a motive for not conceding so much as he had been formerly inclined to grant. After this step his next object was, before he treated directly with the allies, to separate them from each other; and this he contrived skillfully to do, taking advantage of the pitiful subserviency which the Tory ministry seemed already

disposed to display towards him, and giving them the opportunity of alleging commercial advantages as their excuse to the people of England.

Clandestine negotiations took place between France and the British ministry, and the poet Prior was sent over to France to conclude secret engagements which were totally contrary to the spirit of the alliance with the other great powers of Europe. The ministers of Queen Anne found excuses for their conduct; but the victories of Marlborough were themselves a reproach, and while the British government violated the confidence of the allies of England, the great duke justified that confidence by forcing the French lines, by taking Bouchain and Quesnoi, and advancing in a menacing attitude towards Paris.

Opportunely for the British ministry, while these transactions were taking place, the Emperor, Joseph I, died; his brother Charles, the Pretender to the crown of Spain, was elected to the Imperial crown, and the position of all the parties in Europe was altered by that event. The Tory ministry also were fortunate enough to discover some intrigues between Count Galas, the Austrian ambassador in London, and the Whig party in the houses of Parliament. This was seized upon as a legitimate cause of offence, and the Imperial ambassador was ordered to quit the court of London.

Both Eugene and Marlborough were but too well aware of the intrigues which were going on with

the court of France; and while the latter hastened back to London at the end of the campaign of 1711, in order to defend himself and support his party, the former obtained the post of Ambassador extraordinary to the court of England, and endeavoured, but in vain, to re-establish the friendly communication between the Emperor and the British Queen.

The efforts of Marlborough also were fruitless. He was dismissed from his command, charged with peculation, and found a Tory house of commons ready to obey the voice of the ministry, and a house of peers in which the Whig majority had been neutralised by new creations.

The death of the Dauphin, however, and of his eldest son, the Duke of Burgundy, complicated the negotiations with France, by rendering it more probable than before that Philip, King of Spain, might soon succeed to the French throne. Louis, however, obtained with difficulty from Philip a renunciation of the throne of France; and England, finding it convenient to forget how little available renunciations had proved as barriers against ambition, now in fact separated her interests from those of her allies in every respect, except in regard to military operations, which were still carried on against France, under the command of the Earl of Ormond, who is supposed to have received secret instructions not to act with vigour.

A suspension of arms between England and France soon followed, and Ormond separating him-

self from the allied army, withdrew the British troops, with the intention of taking possession of Dunkirk, which Louis had agreed to place in the hands of England as a deposit till the conclusion of a general peace. The Dutch, however, declared that they would not suffer the British forces to effect that purpose. Ormond secured his retreat by seizing upon Ghent and Bruges, and troops sent from England by sea, took possession of Dunkirk, while Great Britain openly avowed her defection from the grand alliance; the conferences which had been established at Utrecht for the purpose of a general peace were interrupted, and the negotiations between France and England carried on in a separate channel.

Thus shamefully abandoned by his most powerful ally, the Emperor still determined to pursue the war with vigour, and Eugene, notwithstanding the retreat of the English troops, laid siege to the important town of Landrecies. Lines were established at Denain, to protect the magazines of the Imperial army; but Villars, whose forces were now equal, if not superior to those of the enemy, prepared to strike one great stroke for the deliverance of the country. The fall of Landrecies would have thrown the whole of France open to the enemy; and the council of Louis even deliberated

* The French accounts state that Eugene had twenty thousand men more than Villars; but this is denied by all other authorities.

as to whether the King should not retreat from Paris, and take up a position on the Loire.

Villars, however, attacked the imperial posts at Denain, and forced the entrenchments of the allies, taking prisoners or putting to the sword more than five thousand men. Marchiennes, another strong post, was taken a few days afterwards. All the imperial posts along the Scarpe were forced with the greatest rapidity, and almost all the magazines of their enemies fell into the hands of the French. An immense number of prisoners were made in these different encounters. Eugene, retiring from Landrecies, was no longer able to keep the field against Villars; and St. Amand, Douai, Quesnoi, and Bouchain were immediately recaptured by the French. The negotiations at Utrecht were resumed, and Holland accepted the mediation of her faithless ally, England.

To give any accurate detail of the various treaties that followed, and which are known by the name of the Treaty of Utrecht, would be absolutely impossible in a work of this nature, for they contained but little that was accurate and defined in themselves, and require more than one volume for their elucidation. Everything showed haste, confusion, irresolution, and a most lamentable want of diplomatic skill on the part of those who had obtained such great triumphs in arms; and everything was done as if upon the principle of leaving the greatest room for contestation and warfare at an after period.

The Duke of Savoy received Sicily as the reward of his frequent tergiversations, together with an aggrandisement of territory which rendered him formidable to the other sovereigns of Italy. England obtained a full establishment in Gibraltar, Minorca, Newfoundland, and Hudson's Bay, together with great commercial advantages, secured by a treaty which entered far more minutely into the details of trade than any paper of the same kind which had appeared before that period. Holland likewise obtained a commercial treaty filled with advantages, and a promise of similar advantages in Spain; but that which gave the Dutch the greatest satisfaction, was the assignment of a number of towns in the Low Countries, which the French garrisons were immediately to deliver to Dutch commissioners for the formation of a barrier against the designs of ambitious neighbours. The sovereignty of those towns, indeed, were reserved to the Emperor, as well as that of the whole of Spanish Flanders, Naples, Sardinia, Lombardy, and several other towns and districts in Italy; but Charles refused to subscribe to terms thus forced upon him, and resolved to continue the war alone.

Portugal obtained little, notwithstanding the important services she had rendered to the allies, and while fearful of entangling herself in difficulties she accepted what was offered, she yet strove for more, and prolonged the negotiations on her part

for some years. The Elector of Bavaria, to whom Philip had ceded the whole of the Spanish Low Countries in 1702, in order to recompense him for the loss of his own territories, was bound by these treaties to yield that important district to the house of Austria, as soon as the Emperor entered into the views of the allies, and restored him to his hereditary dominions of Bavaria, as well as his brother to the Electorate of Cologne. In the mean time he retained the duchy of Luxembourg and the county of Namur.

Such was, in brief, the substance of the several treaties concluded in the course of the year 1713 between England, Holland, and France. But a thousand questions still remained unsettled, a thousand points of the greatest importance were trusted to mere promises; and the Emperor was left to establish by the sword his claim against Spain and France. In fact, the negotiators of Utrecht but ploughed up the political field and cleansed it of the remains of former wars, from which every country had reaped such a harvest of disasters, in order to sow it with the seeds of fresh hostilities, of new diplomatic chicanery and of fresh deceit, bad faith, and treachery.

Well might Louis XIV. rejoice in signing such a treaty. Well might he look back with triumphant scorn to the degrading haughtiness and cruel exactions which had characterized the negotiations of the Hague and Gertruydenberg on the part of

the allies ! Well might he turn to those who had demanded of him to employ his own arms against his own children, and tell them that those schemes which they had then affected to attribute to him, they had themselves placed within his power ; and by refusing to accept what was just and reasonable when he was in the greatest state of depression, had raised him thence at their own expense, and opened wide before him the opportunity of punishing them for the indignities they had fixed upon him. Well might he repeat again and again, when he looked towards the South, “ The Prynées exist no more.”

Domestic misfortunes still surrounded the throne of France : the death of his children weighed heavy upon the King ; but he once more began to see prosperity shine upon his kingdom and upon his arms. The Emperor pushed forward the war upon the side of the Rhine ; but he had no longer money or troops to do so effectually. Villars, active, bold, and intelligent, took the field at the head of the French army, and immediate success crowned all his efforts. Spiers, Worms, and Kaiserlautern, were taken without any resistance. The Imperial General Vaubonne was attacked in his intrenchments in 1713, and completely defeated, and Freiburg in the Breisgau was assailed and captured. It was in vain for the Emperor to resist such a torrent of success, while Philip V. was daily making progress in Spain, and Italy was threatened by his rival.

Proposals of peace, therefore, were made and accepted ; and Eugene and Villars, with equal respect and admiration for each other, were appointed to meet at Rastadt, and confer upon the terms of the pacification. On their first meeting, Villars embraced Eugene, saying, " Sir, we are not enemies. Your enemies are at Vienna, and mine at Versailles."

The whole negotiation was carried on in the same spirit, and in March 1714 a treaty of peace was signed between France and the Empire, by which the treaty of Utrecht was accepted as far as it regarded the Low Countries. The peace of Ryswick was taken as the basis of all arrangements on the side of the Rhine. The Electors of Bavaria and Cologne were restored to their dominions. France retained Strasburg, Landau, Huningen, and New Brissac, as well as the sovereignty of Alsace ; and by after arrangements, which took place at the Diet of Basle, various concessions were made by France to the Elector of Treves, the Palatine, and other minor princes of Germany. In the former year Louis had recognised the Elector of Brandenburg as King of Prussia, and had admitted his claim upon the principality of Neufchatel.

Italy was left by all these treaties in the state in which it was ; and all that was exacted from the Emperor, was a vague promise to restore to the Dukes of Guastalla and Mirandola the territories of which he had deprived them. Treaties,

and explanations of treaties, followed at different times, for a great number of years, showing the most lamentable difference between the famous chef-d'œuvres of Mazarin's skill, the treaties of Munster and the Pyrenées, and the parchment nothings which now cumbered the council tables of Europe.

To England, the most important point in the whole of these transactions was the recognition of the Protestant dynasty of Great Britain by France; and the security given by every step in the negotiation for the peaceful succession of the house of Hanover. That event took place very shortly after, Queen Anne dying in the middle of the year 1714.

Louis XIV. had now passed the ordinary term of human life, and the rest of his days was given up to prepare him for the conclusion of that active existence which he had enjoyed so long, and for the transmission of the vast dominions he possessed to another. Death had swept away the hopes of his family, and between him and his great grandson, Louis XV, stretched out the wide lapse of seventy-two years. To the regency of his kingdom and to the guardianship of the young and weakly heir there were two claimants, against each of whom existed strong objections. The first was Philip V. King of Spain, who, in case of the death of the infant prince, was the natural heir to the throne; but who had renounced his rights, and

confirmed the renunciation with an oath, which he was more unlikely to violate than any other prince then living. The other claimant was the Duke of Orleans, brave, generous, daring, talented, and, though covered with vices, perhaps we might say, with crimes, still perfectly incapable of any act which could endanger the safety of a child committed to his charge, nowever much the laxity of his own morals, and his disbelief of virtue in others, might render his sway dangerous to the kingdom which that child was to inherit.

Under these circumstances, and between these two princes, who were the only near relations he had left after the death of his grandson the Duc de Berry, Louis XIV. hesitated in regard to the appointment of a Regent with a painful degree of indecision. Some of his counsellors advised him to reject both these claimants, to call together the States General of the kingdom, and to cause them to appoint a Regent, whom it was doubtless intended, by those who advised this step, that Louis should himself present to them in his natural son the Duke of Maine. Louis, however, in common with all despotic monarchs, loved not an appeal to his people on any subject, well knowing that deliberation upon one point very often leads to the consideration of others, where the expression of the popular will may be more inconvenient.

Louis, therefore, made his will on the 2nd of August 1714; left the Regency to the Duke of

Orleans, and gave the guardianship of the infant heir, and the command of the household troops, to the Duke of Maine, while he controlled the Duke of Orleans by a council, in which all decisions were to be made by the plurality of voices. This testament he solemnly deposited in the hands of the Parliament, but at the very time he did so, he knew, and avowed his belief, that it would be rendered of no avail.

Nearly at the same time, however, Louis caused the Parliament to register an edict, which under some circumstances might have had the greatest effect upon the execution of the will itself. He declared his illegitimate children capable of succeeding to the throne of France, in default of the princes of the blood. The incapacity of one of those natural children, the Duke of Maine, the want of ambition on the part of another, the Count of Toulouse, the prolonged life of Louis XV, and the wisdom and energy of the Duke of Orleans and Cardinal Dubois, prevented this measure from having any important effect; and the will, with its several clauses, though infringed as Louis had expected, served in some degree to guide the arrangements of the Regency after his death.

Under the suggestions of Madame de Maintenon, and the satiety of unbridled enjoyment, Louis had yielded himself to that sombre and ostentatious species of devotion, from which his passions perhaps more than his good sense had kept him in his

youth and in his manhood ; and the rest of his days was passed in solemn gloom, which did not serve to efface from the minds of the people the wants and miseries which his ambition had called upon them. He lived to see the throne of his grandson firmly established in Spain by the capture of Barcelona, and the recovery of Minorca ; and he occupied himself in various useful regulations which mark the remains of strong good sense, though enfeebled by age. One of his employments was directing the construction of the famous canal of Mardyke. That construction, however advantageous to France, gave great offence to England, and the ambassador of that country ventured to speak to him upon the subject in terms little less sharp than those which had been employed by the Dutch at Gertruydenburg. The King heard him calmly to an end, and then replied, " Sir, I have been always master in my own house, and sometimes I have been master in other people's ; do not make me remember it."

Louis kept up his dignity and the appearance of general health till within a short period of his death, taking a pleasure in all military spectacles, and in driving his own horses, in which he displayed great skill, till the last year of his life. With the latter amusement his people would probably have been content to see him occupy the few sunshiny hours of a wintry time of life ; but the military spectacles, on which vast sums were expended, such as the

mock-siege of Compeigne, gave both pain and offence to the impoverished multitudes of France, who had supported their sovereign so perseveringly in the wars which he either undertook for the purposes of his own ambition, or drew upon his kingdom by grasping at things that were not his own.

In the month of August 1715, however, Louis was seized with a painful disease, which was at first taken for sciatica; it was soon found, however, to be of a more dangerous nature. The great agony that he suffered prevented him from sleeping, and reduced his once robust frame far more than age had been able yet to do. For some weeks this continued, but during the whole of that time, though he never went out, he transacted the business of the state without the slightest abatement of his labour. He in no degree concealed his illness or its probable termination, conversing with his ministers and his courtiers upon his approaching death, and holding long conversations with the Duke of Orleans upon the future government of the kingdom. But he mastered, as far as possible, every expression of pain, and displayed to the last that kingly courtesy to all who approached him, for which he had been famous through life.

One of the last and perhaps the finest traits of Louis' domestic character, showed itself two days before his death, and after he had received extreme unction. While conversing with his confessor upon the awful moment before him, he perceived by the

reflection in a mirror, that two of his servants at the foot of the bed were in tears, and turning to them he asked, "Why do you weep? Did you think I was immortal? I never thought it, and at my age you should have prepared yourselves to lose me."

Not long before his death Louis sent for the boy who was to succeed him, and holding him in his arms, addressed to him words which were in every respect remarkable. The advice which he gave to Philip V. of Spain, when quitting his native country, was wise and judicious; but that, as well as the various fragments which he wrote on other occasions, might be composed for the eyes of the world, and have throughout the whole a share of the grandeur of parade. But in his address to Louis XV, as he held him in his arms for the last time, he not only showed the magnanimity of acknowledging faults, but the discernment to point out in his own conduct those errors which it was most essential for his successor to avoid; and in so doing he perhaps displayed more real greatness than even in the calmness with which he waited the approach of his end; for many a man may look calmly upon death who would fain turn away his eyes from the evils he has committed. His words, as they remained for years written above the pillow of Louis XV, were as follows:

"You are about soon to become the King of a great kingdom. That which I recommend to you

more strenuously is, never to forget your obligations towards God. Remember that you owe Him everything that you are. Strive to preserve peace with your neighbours. I have been too fond of war. Neither imitate me in that, nor in the too great expenses which I have incurred. Seek counsel in all things, and endeavour to find out the best, always to follow it. Lighten the burdens of your people as soon as you can; and do what I myself have had the misfortune not to be able to do."

Such were the words which Louis addressed to his great grandson; but though he felt, and acknowledged that he felt, death to be rapidly advancing, he appeared calm and even cheerful, saying to Madame de Maintenon some time before she left him so cruelly as she ultimately did, "I did not know that it was so easy to die."

As long as he was able Louis maintained the same demeanour as usual, received the Court in his chamber with every testimony of kindness, did all that he could to make those who approached him happy, and at length died on the 1st of September 1715, with the utmost calmness and tranquillity.

The people of France, so far from weeping the death of Louis XIV, gave signs of rejoicing which were at least indecent. Madame de Maintenon herself had left him, as we have said, before he was dead; the Dauphin wept from childish timidity; and but few of the courtiers displayed any great regret.

It may be a question whether the fault was in the nation or the King; whether this indifference to the death of a mighty monarch whom they had once deeply loved, and who had always loved them, proceeded from the remembrance of the evils which his ambition had inflicted upon them, or from that lightness of character which renders anything that is long, wearisome—anything that is new, agreeable. The person who demeaned himself with the greatest propriety, when very little was expected at his hands, was the Duke of Orleans; who, while he prepared to seize upon a higher degree of power than Louis had granted him, seemed to feel the responsibility of his situation more deeply than his character in general permitted him to feel anything.

The character of Louis XIV. has been a subject of dispute ever since his eyes were closed, and nothing that could be said in this place would in all probability affect the ideas of men upon a subject in regard to which each man's opinions are already formed. That he committed many errors there can be no doubt; but he had many high qualities, both of the mind and of the heart; and it is not a little to say of him that, though he struggled with faction in his youth, rendered himself despotic in his prime, and met with bitter griefs, disappointments, and anxieties in his decline, he never showed the slightest trait of a sanguinary disposition in youth, in manhood, or in old age. That

he was ambitious to excess, no one who reads his history can hesitate to admit; but that he ever dreamed of universal dominion few will now believe; and though his object was certainly his own aggrandizement, rather than the aggrandizement of his country, yet he undoubtedly saw and sought the means of raising his own glory in conjunction with the glory of the state. A hundred years are not near sufficient to clear the mind of party prejudices, and Louis XIV, over estimated in his own day, is certainly rated too low at present. The waves of time must flow over his history for a much longer period, ere they can clear it entirely of the gilding of contemporaneous admirers, and the blackening of contemporaneous adversaries.

No one has ever denied, I believe, that Louis was a kind and a generous master; for though with that keen insight into human nature which he gained from sad experience, he himself pronounced that every benefit he conferred made one ungrateful and a hundred discontented persons, yet he ceased not to confer those benefits, lightening them to the ungrateful, but doubling them to the grateful, by the manner in which they were dispensed.

That Louis was kind and feeling as a King has been denied, and in evidence of the contrary has been brought forward his conduct to the Huguenots, and his inactivity during the scarcity which afflicted France in 1709. His conduct to the Huguenots was the effect of bigotry; and bigotry is always

cruel. . . That he was cruel where bigotry moved him cannot be refused; and, it might be added, that under such circumstances he was most impolitic also; but his indifference during the miseries of his people in 1709, is by no means proved, and indeed the contrary seems established beyond a doubt. He had not the means of relieving the people, and therefore may possibly have ordered their wretchedness to be kept from his ears; but at the same time it is recorded that he himself set the example of abstinence to his nobility; that he took means to supply bread at a very cheap rate, to all who were willing to work for it; that he was moved to tears when the details of his subjects' sufferings were placed before him; and that, for their sakes, he offered to make the greatest sacrifice that Louis XIV. could make—the sacrifice of his ambition.

That he continued the use of the torture, that he maintained the evil practice of arbitrary imprisonment, used it in the most remorseless manner, and confined for years a man whose condemnation by any competent tribunal was never made public, under the horrid artifice of an irremovable mask, are all dark instances of that despotic spirit which he had imbibed too early, and retained too late. But that he failed to administer equal justice amongst his subjects, or favoured the nobles in the commission of crime, any impartial person who

reads attentively the ordinary records of his reign will immediately deny.

Louis had great command over himself in almost all things, and carried that command to a highly dignified extent in some things, while in others it descended to hypocrisy; but we cannot hear him tell the priest who would have excluded him from the chamber of the dying princess, that it is useful for kings to see such sights, without feeling that there was a native elevation in the man which served as a basis for the dignity of the monarch. That he had active and that he had passive courage is clear; in youth he exposed himself on all occasions to the fire of the enemy; in age he never shunned any of those contagious sicknesses which desolated his family, and swept off the young around him. In prosperity he more than once forgot himself, and the despot spoke out when he had conquered; but in adversity there was not the corresponding depression which is the sign of a weak mind; and he bore reverse more nobly than success. He was firm and steady in his attachments, guarding himself carefully against his own prejudices, and against the prejudices of others. Though he often rewarded success as a merit, he never punished misfortune as a fault; he was ever mild towards error, when it was not viewed through the medium of bigotry, and in his own nature was forgiving and of long endurance. He bore con-

tradiction with calmness, and endured even insolence with extraordinary moderation. In his nature he was mild and not sanguinary, and during a reign of seventy years with despotic power, there are fewer occasions mentioned on which the crime of high treason was punished with death than in any equal period in the history of France.

THE END.

